AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE EUROPEAN UNION'S GENERATION AND USE OF SEA POWER

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by

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Abstract

In the last decade, the European Union has been increasingly active in the maritime domain. Based on the achievements that the European Union has accomplished in the international maritime security domain, the thesis claims that the European Union is a sea power from the perspective of modern sea power theory. Sea power theory is a branch of geopolitical theory. Modern sea power theory is based on the widest interpretation of the concept of sea power, arguing that sea power includes not only a military element but also geographical, economic, political, and strategic considerations, and possesses three functions: to protect maritime shipping, to maintain control of the sea and to influence events on land by naval means. Sea power has inputs and outputs.

Through the lens of sea power theory, the thesis analyses the different elements of European Union sea power, explores how this is generated and carries out a thorough investigation of its practice through four detailed case studies, including three maritime Common Security and Defence Policy missions – Operation Atalanta, Operation Sophia and Operation IRINI – EU-funded Critical Maritime Routes programmes and the planned Coordinated Maritime Presences in the Gulf of Guinea, as well as the practice of 'soft sea power' in the South China Sea. Ultimately, the thesis presents the findings that the generation of European Union sea power is the consequence of the integration procedure as well as the demands of globalisation, and that this is a regional sea power with limited military strength, focusing on the fight against non-traditional maritime threats in addition to the maintenance of good order at sea.

List of Abbreviations

AMISOM	African Union Mission in Somalia
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
CARD	Coordinated Annual Review on Defence
CDP	Capacity Development Plan
CFSP	Common Foreign and Security Policy
CMR	Critical Maritime Routes
CMRGO	CMR Gulf of Guinea 2013-2016
CMRP	Critical Maritime Routes Programme
CRMSON	CMR Monitoring, Support and Evaluation Mechanism
CSDP	Common Security and Defence Policy
EDF	European Defence Fund
EEAS	European External Action Service
EPF	European Peace Facility
ESDP	European Security and Defence Policy
EU	European Union
EUNAVFOR	European Naval Force
FAC	Foreign Affairs Council
FAD	Fish Aggregating Devices
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation
Frontex	European Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders of the Member States of the EU
GoGIN	Gulf of Guinea Inter-regional Network 2016-2020
HR	High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy
IMP	Integrated Maritime Policy
IR	International Relations
ISS	Internal Security Strategy

IUU	Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated fishing
MPCC	Military Planning and Conduct Capability
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NIP	National Implementation Plans
PESCO	Permanent Structured Cooperation
RUSI	Royal United Services Institute
SLOCS	Sea Line of Communications
UN	United Nations
UNCLOS	The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea
UNSC	UN Security Council
WeCAPS	Improving Port Security in West and Central Africa 2019-2022
WFP	World Food Programme
WMD	Weapon of Mass Destruction

Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1 Introduction

> The seas are Europe's lifeblood. Europe's maritime spaces and its coasts are central to its well-being and prosperity – they are Europe's trade routes, climate regulator, sources of food, energy and resources, and a favoured site for its citizens' residence and recreation (European Commission, 2007, p.1).

This PhD thesis seeks to provide a robust understanding of why the European Union (EU) is a sea power. In the last decade, the EU has been making its mark in the maritime domain. Geographically, due to the several rounds of enlargement, the EU has expanded its maritime status as the territory covered by the Member States has stretched to the shores of the Atlantic, the Mediterranean Sea, the Baltic Sea, and the Black Sea. Economically, as a global trading power, the EU is extremely reliant on maritime shipping, because "90% of its external and 40% of its internal trade is seaborne" (ec.europa.eu, 2017). Politically, the EU has clearly demonstrated the aspiration to be a global maritime security provider. In 2008, the EU launched its first naval Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) mission, European Naval Force (EUNAVFOR) Somalia - Operation Atalanta (henceforth Operation Atalanta). In 2015 it launched its maritime military mission EUNAVFOR Med - Operation Sophia (henceforth Operation Sophia) and then in 2020 launched Operation IRINI in the Mediterranean Sea. In the Gulf of Guinea, the EU uses the Instrument contributing to Security and Peace and the European Development Fund to fund the maritime security cooperation projects with western and central African countries. In addition to this, the EU decided to launch the first pilot case of the Coordinated Maritime Presences concept in the Gulf of Guinea. And the EU is also involved in another maritime hotspot in Asia-Pacific region – the

South China Sea. Based on these observations, the thesis claims that the EU is a sea power.

Traditionally, however, the EU seems to like not to be seen as a sea power on the world stage. There are reasons for this. “Unlike the Asia-Pacific region, seen primarily as a maritime environment, Europe is most often thought about in terms of its land, as a continent whose destiny is firmly embedded in the great Eurasian landmass” (Nordenman, 2016, p.22). Moreover, there is a common belief that only independent sovereign states can have sea power, as all the discussions on sea power are based on the assumption that sea power originates in independent sovereign states. The EU is an international organisation composed of 27 Member States. Can an international organisation have sea power? There is generally a narrow understanding of sea power, which claims that sea power equals naval power. If we are to follow this logic, because the EU has no integrated naval force, the EU is not a sea power. As “puzzlement arises when things do not fit together as anticipated, challenging existing knowledge” (Gustafsson and Hagstrom, 2018, p.639), so the overarching puzzle of this thesis is: Why is the EU a sea power? To address this overarching puzzle, the following research question will be answered: What are the theoretical and empirical considerations which can explain why the EU is a sea power?

To begin the investigation, this chapter is divided into five Sections. The Section following this Introductory Section lays out the research aims of the thesis, arguing that there is a gap in the literature on EU sea power. The Third Section presents the research design and the methodology of the thesis. Section Four explains the data gathering, noting the combination of primary data sources and secondary evaluations from the existing literature. Finally, the outline of the thesis will be stated.

1.2 Research Aims

Oceans matter to the EU and its Member States in every aspect: economically, the EU’s international trade and energy security replies on the security of surrounding waters and

strategic maritime routes; politically, the EU's aspiration to be a global actor in the world arena cannot be achieved without sufficient maritime capabilities; militarily, the existing and emerging traditional as well as non-traditional maritime threats challenge Europe's safety and stability. In addition, the EU's border safety is challenged by the crisis in the Mediterranean Sea, which in turn poses an immediate challenge to the security and solidarity of the EU and its Member States.

Hence, the first aim of the thesis is to apply a holistic investigation of the EU's capacity in the maritime security field. This thesis challenges the notion that the EU cannot be seen as a sea power in the world. Based on the observations in 1.1 above, the thesis poses three inter-related questions: Is the EU a sea power in the making? If so, what kind of sea power it is? And to what extent?

To answer the first question depends on how we benchmark 'sea power' – whether it is a narrowly defined military term or a broader geopolitical term. To do so, the core concept of 'sea power' needs to be critically analysed. As one of the most important geopolitical concepts, the idea of 'sea power' was coined a hundred years ago. Like all other international theories, unsurprisingly, this concept develops according to the changes in the world economy and politics. Hence, the classical sea power theory is being replaced by a critical sea power theory. The chasm between the classical sea power theory and the critical sea power theory depends on an understanding of the notion in the narrow sense or the widest sense. In the narrow sense, sea power is just synonymous with naval power and is understood as a mere military term. In the widest sense, however, the notion is understood as a broader concept which includes not only the military element but also geographical, economic, political, and strategic considerations. Obviously, in a context of globalisation, which is characterised by the close connection of all the elements of the society, sea power has links with not only naval force, but also a lot of the other influencing factors. To that end, the basis of the

study is built by providing a more inclusive definition and broader and profound insights into this notion.

Secondly, central to EU sea power is its generation and its practice. A framework for the elements of EU sea power is established. Based on the critical analysis of the notion in general, the elements of EU sea power are more inclusive, which means that the economic, political, institutional, and strategic factors all play an important role. Regarding the EU, geographically the several rounds of European enlargement led to the EU's shift in the maritime status (Vivero and Mateos, 2004) and stretched the maritime borders to the Mediterranean Sea, the Baltic Sea, the Atlantic Ocean and the Black Sea. Besides the EU's geographical reality, the EU's international and domestic trade relies heavily on maritime shipping, while the EU also has a strong Blue Economy. This stimulates the EU's urgent need to create and sustain good maritime order. Moreover, the EU's economic and technical strength provides conditions for the EU's deeper participation in the international maritime security sphere. However, besides the incentives to protect its international-trade-dependent economy, the EU also has a political aspiration to play a more active role in the international field and become a maritime security provider. Motivated by this ambition, the EU established the cross-sectoral maritime institutions and naval capabilities both at the EU level and Member States level. All these factors intertwine and form a coherent whole – EU sea power.

However, sea power is not merely the combination of the material and immaterial elements, but also the art and the approach to use them (Till, 2013). The practice of EU sea power in the past decade is explored in a dynamic approach. The thesis encompasses four case studies, including the EU's three maritime military operations, Operation Atalanta, Operation Sophia, and Operation IRINI, EU's comprehensive maritime security approach in the Gulf of Guinea, and the EU's response to the maritime disputes in the South China Sea. Through detailed observation and analysis, a dynamic approach to observe EU sea power is established on a case-by-case basis.

Given the fact that opinion is divided on the identity of the EU in the maritime security domain, the thesis argues that the EU is a sea power. In doing so, the thesis seeks in a systematic way to provide a robust understanding of the EU's capabilities in the maritime security domain.

1.3 Research Design and Methodology

The analytical framework of this thesis is based on the interpretation and theoretical understanding of sea power theory. The critical analysis of sea power is the logical starting point for the argument of the thesis. As mentioned in the Second Section of this chapter, whether the EU is a sea power depends on how we define 'sea power'. If we define sea power in a narrow sense, considering that sea power equals naval power, then the argument that the EU is a sea power is impossible, as the EU does not have an integrated naval force. However, if we define sea power in its widest sense, which means sea power is supposed to be a much broader concept including geographical, economic, political, institutional, and military factors, then the EU definitely can be viewed as a sea power.

The theoretical framework involves interpreting the definition of sea power, the elements of sea power, and the consequences of sea power. In this stage of the analysis of EU sea power, based on the critical sea power features which emerge from the definitions of sea power and related analysis, a critical sea power theory is built. Modern sea power can be regarded as a matrix composed of two parts. One part is the generation of sea power; in other words, it is supposed to have all the essential elements which form the sea power, and the elements can be considered the 'input' of sea power. Another part is the practice of sea power; that is, it is supposed to fulfil all the functions that a sea power should have, and the practice of sea power can be considered the 'output' of sea power. As such, a critical sea power theory is established in this way: modern sea power is made up of the geographical, economic, political, institutional and military elements, and has the capabilities to protect international commerce and the

utilisation of oceanic resources, to perform sea control by naval means, and to influence the events on land by events at sea.

This framework is then applied to the EU to test whether the EU is a sea power. Firstly, it focused on the generation of sea power. As clarified in the theoretical framework, modern sea power possesses a few essential elements, including the economic, political, institutional and military factors. Starting from this point of observation, the thesis outlines the elements of EU sea power. They are the EU's geographical reality, maritime interests, political aspirations, cross-sectoral maritime institutions, and naval capabilities. Particularly, this Section clarifies the doubt that the EU does not have an integrated naval force. Even though the EU does not have an integrated naval force, its ad hoc security and defence mechanism provides it with enough potential to play an important role in the maritime domain.

As mentioned above, the two aspects of sea power can be defined as the "input" and "output" of sea power (Till, 2013). Having analysed the generation of EU sea power, the thesis sets out to explore the 'output' of EU sea power in different areas on the world stage. The assessment of the EU sea power outcome is similarly based on the sea power theory, which means that sea power is supposed to fulfil three functions: to protect international commerce and utilisation of oceanic resources, to gain sea control, and influence events on land by means of naval forces. Then, through four detailed case studies, the thesis carries out a thorough investigation of the practice of EU sea power.

As one of the common ways of undertaking social science research, the case study method is the core research method used in this thesis. "A case study is an empirical method that investigates a contemporary phenomenon (the "case") in depth and within its real-world context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context may not be clearly evident" (Yin, 2018, p.15). The case study method can be considered as "an attempt to understand and interpret a spatially and temporally

bounded set of events" (Levy, 2008). As Yin (2009) points out, it is the "preferred strategy when how or why questions are being posed, when the investigator has little control over events, and when the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon within some real-life context" (p. 1). The study on the practice of EU sea power meets the requirements of the case study method, that is, "describe an intervention and the real-world context in which it occurred" (Yin, 2018, p.18).

The EU's intervention in the maritime security domain can be categorised from two different angles. On one hand, they can be classified according to the forms in which they are conducted, such as CSDP maritime military missions, EU-funded maritime security projects, or declaratory diplomacy[1]. On the other hand, they are conducted in different mise-en-scenes, such as in the neighbourhood of Europe, in the waters surrounding the African continent, or in the Asia-Pacific region. In this case, a single-case study does not suffice to illustrate the diversity and complexity of the practice of EU sea power. Accordingly, the thesis adopts a multi-cases structure, as "the evidence from multiple cases is often considered more compelling, and the overall multi-case study is therefore regarded as being more robust" (Yin, 2018, p. 54).

Under this design, four cases are examined in the thesis. The first case study is the EU's first maritime CSDP operation – Operation Atalanta. It is "an autonomous, military, anti-piracy operation in the Gulf of Aden off the coast of Somalia" (Dover and Kristensen, 2016, p. 252). The second case study is the EU's second and third maritime CFDP operations – Operation Sophia and Operation IRINI. They are discussed as one case, as they were launched successively in the Mediterranean Sea, and there is a considerable overlap in their operational objectives. The third case study is the EU's

[1] "Declaratory diplomacy is a staple of modern diplomacy. Issuing statements and declarations is meant to convey positions, show presence and engagement as well as to apply political pressure. On the contrary of the traditional quiet diplomacy, declaratory diplomacy looks for and responds to its audience. In the European Union, the High Representative is in charge of the declaratory diplomacy" (Feron, 2015, p.1).

response to the non-traditional maritime threats in the Gulf of Guinea. The fourth case study is the EU's response to the maritime disputes occurring in the South China Sea.

The rationale for selecting these four cases includes a number of factors. From the perspective of 'output' forms of EU sea power, these cases reflect the diversity of EU sea power 'output'. Obviously, maritime CSDP operations are the most visible and classic way in which the EU practices sea power. Examining maritime operations "provides a far more reliable guide to the EU's role as a security actor in assessing the actual strategic and policy choices made by both the EU and its Member States than the words emitted from Brussels" (Dombrowski and Reich, 2018, p. 8). However, the maritime CSDP operation is by no means the only form of EU sea power practice. The third case study and fourth case study outline the other forms of EU sea power practice, focusing on the non-military aspects of the EU's response. These four case studies, therefore, outline the basic forms of EU sea power output.

From the perspective of the operational area where EU sea power exists, these four case studies cover four different maritime hotspots – the Horn of Africa, the Mediterranean Sea, the Gulf of Guinea, and the South China Sea – in all of which the EU has significant geostrategic and economic interests. Geographically, the Mediterranean Sea is in the EU's neighbourhood and has a direct impact on the EU and its Member States. The Horn of Africa and the Gulf of Guinea are extremely important for EU energy security and international commerce. As for the South China Sea, it provides an important bellwether for assessing the veracity of the EU's aspiration as a "global maritime security provider" (eeas.europa.eu, 2021).

While each of these four case studies is independent and complete within themselves, there is a logical connection between them. The connection between the first case study and second case study is that they are both CSDP maritime operations, but in different operational areas with different operational objectives. The first case and the third case

share the same objective of counter-piracy, but they are different in form. The case study of the EU in the South China Sea can be as a "least-likely" case, which is "especially tailored to confirmation of a theory, despite being a tough test case in which the theory in question is unlikely to provide a good explanation" (Shen, 2012, p.12). It is selected by virtue of its geographical location, the characteristic nature of the conflict and the EU's customary response. Therefore, these four case studies constitute a whole, which more comprehensively reflects the overall picture of EU sea power 'output' from different perspectives.

Indubitably, sea power theory is the theoretical framework throughout the whole study. In terms of an individual case study, there is a clear need to have a more specific framework. For the first and second case studies, the framework 'ends, ways, and means' is introduced for the study of a military operation. 'Ends, ways and means' is a strategic framework developed by Arthur F. Lykke Jr. "Strategy is a coherent expression of a process that identifies the ends, ways and means designed to achieve a certain goal" (Eikmeier, 2007, p.63). "Ends are the objectives or desired outcomes of a given strategy" (ibid). "Ways are actions. They are the methods and process executed to achieve the ends" (ibid). "Means are the resources required to execute the way" (ibid). Therefore, "a strategy is balanced and entails little risk if the selected way (method) is capable and has sufficient means (resources) to obtain the desired end (objective)" (ibid). The EU's three CSDP maritime military operations, which appear in the thesis as two case studies, are placed in this framework and analysed in depth.

Regarding the third and fourth case studies – the practice of EU sea power in the Gulf of Guinea and in the South China Sea – another research framework is introduced – the EU's common working process adopted by the *European Union Maritime Security Strategy*. This framework can be encapsulated as 'interests, threats and response'. This framework begins by identifying the EU's interests in the maritime domain. Then it

describes the maritime threats. Finally, it focuses on formulating a complex and multifaceted response to the threats (Council of the EU, 2014a).

1.4 Sources of Empirical Data

Aligned with a deductive approach, the empirical findings in this thesis are exclusively qualitative. Data are gathered via desk-based research as follows:

1.4.1 Documentation

Concerning the composition and the practice of EU sea power, a comprehensive analysis of EU documentation is conducted regarding legal provisions, decision-making process, institutional arrangements and major actors. By extensively reviewing the EU policy documents from the Databases for European Union Studies at the University of Canterbury, the European Commission's library database and information online, the generation of EU sea power is presented in the Chapter Three. Qualitative content analysis is applied during this process.

The Council of the European Union

Given the fact that "the Council system is at the institutional heart of decision-making in the EU" (Lewis, 2016, P.158), it plays a key role among the EU institutions in the maritime security domain.

> The European Council defines the strategic outlook for the EU, adopts common strategies, and provides guidelines for the Foreign Affairs Council (FAC) on how to translate CFSP treaty provisions and strategies into policies and practice (Dover and Kristensen 2016, p.247).

The Council's conclusions and decisions are key materials in forming the basis of analysis on the implementation of practical measures in terms of achieving specific security and defence policy objectives. The documentation from the Council system, such as the *Council Decision*, *Statements*, and *Conclusions*, reflects the concerns and decisions of the EU and its Member States regarding maritime security issue. *EU maritime security strategy* (Council of the EU, 2014a) and the two *Action Plans*

(Council of the EU, 2014b; 2018) provide the EU's basic outlook in the maritime security domain. The three CSDP maritime military operations – Operation Atalanta, Operation Sophia and Operation IRINI – are still formally intergovernmental, and the Council's decisions on these operations which clearly defined the mandate of these actions are extremely relevant. Furthermore, the regional strategy documents launched by the Council play a key role in the third and fourth case studies of the thesis, because these two case studies both focus on specific regions – the Gulf of Guinea and the South China Sea. Therefore, the *EU strategy on the Gulf of Guinea* (Council of EU, 2014c) and *Council conclusions on the Gulf of Guinea Action Plan 2015-2020* (Council of EU, 2015) provide the framework for the study of the practice of EU sea power in the region. And the fourth case study is also based on the official statements declared by the Council, as the research focused on the EU's declaratory diplomacy.

The Commission

The European Commission, which "is clearly involved in the EU's policy process from start to finish" (Egeberg, 2016, p.126) plays a constructive role in implementing the maritime security policies at the EU level. The Commission proposals and the Commission communications in the maritime domain, such as *Green Paper: Towards a Future Maritime Policy for the Union: A European Vision for the Oceans and Seas* (Commission, 2006) and *An Integrated Maritime Policy for the European Union* (Commission, 2007) are basic documents while examining the generation of EU sea power in Chapter Three. And the two joint communications to the Parliament and the Council, *Elements for a new EU strategy on China* (Commission, 2016c) and *Towards a comprehensive Strategy with Africa* (Commission, 2020), connect the EU sea power to the EU foreign policy in the third and fourth case studies. In addition, statistics in the thesis, such as the shipping business of the EU, the capacity of the EU ports in Chapter Three, and international trade between the EU and certain countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in fourth case study, come from the Eurostat Statistics provided by the Commission.

Documentation at national level

Given the fact that some maritime operations are deployed at a Member State level, the documentation at national level is also important in the thesis. In particular, the documents from the French Department of Foreign Affairs and the French Department of Defence provide information on the maritime operations deployed in the Gulf of Guinea and in the South China Sea by the French Navy. The discourse of the then French Defence Minister in the Shangri-La Dialogue is also important to an understanding of the French stance on the maritime disputes in the South China Sea.

Discourse and interview of High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (HR)

Given the role the HR plays in security and defence policy, a number of discourses and interviews of the HR can be seen as official data in some policy instruments. For instance, the HR gives discourse in the Shangri-La Dialogue from 2013, and these discourses are important primary data for an understanding of the EU's strategic interests of the Asia-Pacific region, which is part and parcel of the fourth case study of the thesis.

1.4.2 Other Empirical Data for case studies

For the three CSDP maritime military missions, the empirical data is based on the archives provided by the Operations Headquarters. For Operation Atalanta, during December 2008 to July 2020, the Press Centre in the Headquarters launched about 2300 Communications on the daily actions of the participating vessels and staff, including training, operations, and discourse of their leaders. For Operation Sophia, during July 2015 to October 2019, there are about 270 Communications launched by the Headquarters, and for Operation IRINI, there are about 18 Communications from the launch of the operation. These communications cover all the aspects of the operation and provide the primary source for Case Study One and Case Study Two.

For the third case study – the practice of EU sea power in the Gulf of Guinea – the Communications and the Newsletters released by the Critical Maritime Routes (CMR) Programme can be seen as a primary source for the research. Since the Commission devolves the duty of monitoring, supporting and evaluating the CMR Programme to the Royal United Services Institute (RUSI), the *RUSI CRIMSON Report* can be considered as primary data in Case Study Three.

And the fourth case study – the practice of EU sea power in the South China Sea – relies heavily on the official documentation from the Council of the EU and the European Commission. For the purpose of tracking the comprehensive response adopted by the EU, all the declarations issued by the European Commission concerning the South China Sea are first-hand materials for this case study.

1.4.3 Secondary Source

Apart from the primary sources, the academic journals and published books serve as secondary sources in the thesis. The research results from the top think-tanks specialising in security and defence, such as the EU Institute for Security Studies, Chatham House, and Egmont Institute, are used as evidence supporting the findings of the case studies in the thesis.

Additionally, a number of research reports from the European Parliamentary Research Service, which is an in-house research service and think tank, are also used as secondary sources in the thesis.

1.4.4 Timeframe

This thesis seeks to explore the elements of EU sea power and the practice of EU sea power between 2008 and 2020. There are a number of reasons to choose the year 2008 as a starting point of the study on EU sea power. In 2008 the EU launched the first maritime military CSDP operation in the Horn of Aden off the Somali coast. It can be

seen as a landmark for EU naval power, which for the first time sailed to the 'Global Commons'.

The launch of Operation Atalanta cannot be seen as an accidental decision of the EU. In 2007, the Commission adopted the communication *An Integrated Maritime Policy for the European Union*, in which the EU expounded its vision and planning on ocean utilisation and protection, which is from the early focus on regional ocean management and governance to active participation in global ocean affairs (Liu, 2015). Among the five action areas[2] in which an EU integrated Maritime Policy focused, there were two action areas reflecting the EU's ambitions to be a global maritime actor: "promoting Europe's leadership in international maritime affairs" and "rising the visibility of maritime Europe" (Commission, 2007, p.13; p.15). Additionally, in the same year, the EU finished the Eastern enlargement by accepting ten new Member States[3]. The outcome of the EU enlargement led to a significant increase of the EU's coastline, as well as the extension of the EU's sea borders. Against this backdrop, the EU launched the first maritime military CSDP operation for the purpose of playing a more important role in the maritime domain. Therefore, the year 2008 can be seen as a starting point for the development of EU sea power.

1.5 Summary of Chapters

This thesis consists of eight chapters. This introductory chapter is followed by a presentation of the theoretical framework in Chapter Two. The aim is to develop a conceptual framework based on the existing sea power theory. It starts by introducing the Mahanian sea power theory, then focuses on the debate on the understanding of the notion, and finally develops the concept of modern sea power theory as well as the

[2] Action areas for an EU Integrated Maritime Policy: Maximising the sustainable use of the oceans and sea, building a knowledge and innovation base for the maritime policy, delivering the highest quality of life in coastal regions, promoting Europe's leadership in international maritime affairs, and raising the visibility of maritime Europe (Commission, 2007).

[3] They are Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia, Bulgaria and Romania.

elements of modern sea power. It comes to the conclusion that sea power can be seen as a matrix: one part is the generation of sea power, and it is based on all the geographical, economic, political and military elements as input; on the other hand, it is a combination of the ability to protect the international commerce, to maintain sea control by naval means, and to influence events on land by the events at sea. And this notion of sea power implies that the EU is a sea power.

Based on the framework of the elements of sea power in general concluded in Chapter Two, Chapter Three outlines the generation of EU sea power from the perspective of sea power elements. Following an inductive approach, it comes to the conclusion that the EU, like individual sovereign states, has all the vital components of sea power. Its geographical reality, maritime interests, political aspirations, cross-sectoral maritime institutions, and naval capabilities interacted and led to the generation of EU sea power.

Having presented the 'input' of EU sea power, the following four chapters demonstrate the different forms of practice of EU sea power through case studies. Chapter Four takes Operation Atalanta as a case study. This operation is analysed under the framework of 'end, ways and means'. Through the collection, induction and analysis of data, it comes to the finding that the practice of EU sea power in the counter-piracy fight in the Horn of Africa shows three abilities that sea power should have. It is able to protect international commerce and utilisation of oceanic resources, to maintain control of the sea through naval presence, and to influence the events on land through naval forces. It is noteworthy, however, that the low-intensity nature of the counter-piracy operation and cooperation with the western partnership are two indispensable conditions for the victory of the EU Operation Atalanta.

Chapter Five takes Operation Sophia and Operation IRINI as case studies. As they were launched successively in the Mediterranean Sea, and there is a considerable overlap in their operational objectives, they are discussed together in the same chapter. The same

framework ‘ends, ways and means’ is used in this case study. And it comes to two findings that while EU sea power matters in the Mediterranean Sea, it is restrained by some conditions, such as a feasible operational objective for the purpose of influencing the events on land, as well as cooperation from Western partners.

Chapter Six takes the practice of EU sea power in the Gulf of Guinea as case study. This chapter seeks to explore the EU’s different approaches to ‘output’ its sea power under the EU maritime security working framework ‘interests, threats, and response’. As piracy and organised crime in the Gulf of Guinea have seriously harmed the EU’s economic and security interests, the EU adopts a comprehensive approach by funding and conducting the cooperation projects with local countries in the maritime domain. Meanwhile, the EU plans a Coordinated Maritime Presence concept in this region as well. Through analysing the EU official documents and observing the practice of EU sea power, the findings that maritime security is taken as a foreign policy tool towards Africa by the EU, and it implied that the practice of EU sea power in the Gulf of Guinea has profoundly affected the EU-Africa partnership.

Chapter Seven takes the practice of EU sea power in the South China Sea as a case study. The aim of this chapter is to find out how the EU, as a global maritime security provider, uses its sea power in the Asia-Pacific region. The chapter adopts the same framework as in the preceding case study. Through an overview of the official statements the EU issued on the South China Sea issue, the thesis outlines the EU’s economic, partnership and identity interests in this region, and presents the finding that the practice of EU sea power in the South China Sea is mainly in the form of soft sea power[4] by means of the EU’s declaratory diplomacy based on the international law.

[4] Hard sea power and soft sea power are two terms coined by Chris Parry in his monograph “super highway: sea power in the 21th century”. According to Parry, hard sea power and soft sea power are two different ways in which sea power represents. Hard sea power is characterised by those components of sea power that enable an individual, group or state to enforce its will at sea or to influence decisions on land, by the threat of use of force. Soft sea power, on the contrary, Soft power, on the other hand – comprising trade, the exploitation of the resources of the sea, humanitarian aid, fishing, tourism and all other maritime activities

Meanwhile, the arms trade between the EU Member States and the claimant countries in the South China Sea, as well as the freedom of navigation operations conducted by the EU Member States, can be seen as the hard sea power of the EU deployed in that region. Moreover, the EU succeeds in incorporating the maritime issue in the South China Sea into its overall strategy towards China and making it a powerful lever against China.

Finally, the concluding Chapter Eight reviews the main findings of the thesis before placing these results in the wider context of the literature on sea power. The relevance and contribution of the thesis is explored. Future avenues of research are then discussed.

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that do not imply the use of force – can be deployed at sea because of the cooperative, permissive trading environment that exists, secured by international law and the threat of sanction or force against those seeking to disrupt a system that pretty much works for everyone.

Chapter 2 Sea Power Theory as an Analytical Framework

2.1 Introduction

This chapter applies sea power theory to the study of EU sea power. The theoretical goal is to identify an analytical framework that will be used in the examination of the extent to which the EU is a sea power. Arguably, the EU has gradually become an important component of the international system composed of nation states. There are already multiple International Relations (IR) theories to describe this complex system. So one question is: amongst these IR theories, which can be used to understand and explain the EUs capability to maintain maritime security and sustain good order at sea?

First of all, the maritime dimension of EU security refers primarily to the EU's external policies. The modern international system is a combination of many countries that live on land and use the sea as a link (Shi, 2012). In this system, sea power is usually outward. It naturally has a direct and close connection with a country's foreign behaviour, and is an important tool for a country to handle international relations. Against this backdrop, the IR theories which are applied in the field of foreign policy can be used in the maritime security dimension.

Secondly, to order to answer the question 'Why the EU is a sea power', the primary step which needs to be taken is to clarify the meaning of the term 'sea power', because to answer the question whether the EU is a sea power depends on how we benchmark 'sea power'. Is this term a narrowly defined military term or it is a broader geopolitical term in the IR theories? Therefore, the core concept of 'sea power' needs to be critically analysed.

The chapter comprises seven sections. Section One is the introductory section, providing a brief theoretical background. Section Two examines the relationship among realism theory, geopolitical theory and sea power theory. It argues that sea power theory, in essence, is a particular form of geopolitics based on the interaction of physical and human geography. Section Three introduces the Mahanian sea power theory. By critically reviewing the literature, it demonstrates that the Mahanian sea power theory is a breakthrough in the historical context of the time. However, in the statement of the theory, there is some ambiguity, which has triggered the extensive debates between the two opposite interpretations of its content. Section Four probes the modern sea power theory. In comparison to the classical theory, the modern sea power theory reflects the features of sea power in the globalisation era. Section Five develops an analytical framework by detailing the elements of modern sea power, as well as explaining the importance of clarifying it. Section Six explores the new features of sea power in the era of globalisation. Section Seven is the conclusion, in which the correlation between sea power theory and EU's sea power is presented.

2.2 Realism Theory, Geopolitical Theory and Sea Power Theory

Sea power theory is a branch of classical geopolitical theory[5]. "Geopolitics can arguably be considered an integral branch of realist theories in International Relations, that is, a particular form of realism that is based on the influence of the natural environments defined by geography and technology" (Wu, 2018, p.787). Realism, as a widely used IR theory, focuses on "power" and "national interest" (Morgenthau, 1972). The thesis argues that realism can be used to study EU sea power. The EU, after decades of integration, "starts having state-like characteristics … should then be expected to defend its common interests internationally" (Laursen, 2020, p.11). As a matter of fact,

[5] There are two distinct versions of geopolitics: the critical and the classical. Classical geopolitics "treats geographical space an existential pre-condition for all politics", while critical geopolitics is "devoted to the study of how geographical space is represented and signified by political agents as a part of a larger project of accruing, managing and aggrandizing power" (Bassin, 2004, p.620). In this thesis, geopolitics is used as a synonym for classical geopolitics unless further clarified.

the EU has become an "internationally sea-policy actor" (ibid). Therefore, it is suitable to put EU sea power into a realist theoretical framework.

Specifically, geopolitics is "the spatial study of the relationships among states and the implications of these relationships for the morphology of the political map as a whole" (Parker, 1994, p. 170). In terms of disciplines, geopolitics was born at the end of the 19th century. German geographer Friedrich Ratzel (1833-1904) can be seen as the father of modern political geography. Ratzel (1897) invented the concept of 'anthropogeography', which integrated geography, anthropology, and politics. To Ratzel (1897), the fortunes of states were determined by two key factors, 'space' and 'position', and only a powerful country could survive by continuous expansion. Ratzel's views had a profound impact on later generations, and spawned a new discipline - political geography (ibid).

Swedish political scientist Rudolf Kjellen (1917) coined the term 'geopolitics'. Being strongly influenced by Ratzel, Kjellen defined 'geopolitics' as "the science which conceives of the state as a geographical organism or as a phenomenon in space" (Kjellen, 1917, p.22). For the first time, the concept of "geopolitics" was used to describe the geographical basis of state power. Kjellen (1917) believed that "territory was considered to be one of the most fundamental factors in state power; thus an understanding of the significance of territory was of vital importance to any assessment of the best interests of the state" (Parker, 1998, p.171).

Notwithstanding the development of geopolitics, there are two characteristics that remain unchanged. On one hand, the basic methodology consists of the "examination of states as the building blocks of the world's political space" (ibid, p.174). On the other hand, geopolitics focuses on the "use of geopolitical methods in the resolution of problems" (ibid). However, even though states are the main subject of geopolitics, Parker (1998) claimed that "groups or cluster of states located with particular

geographical areas" can be considered to have the same geographical identities as states because they possess not only "common features and interests" but also "certain overall geographical characteristics" (p.176). Hence, it is feasible to make the EU the subject of study from a geopolitical perspective.

As with realist theories, geopolitics insists on power. For geopolitics, geographical locations, strategic orientations, and territorial size and material resource are the determinants of great power. Theoretically, there are three main types of geopolitical actors: sea powers, land powers and land-sea hybrid powers (Wu, 2018). With a geopolitical view, the American naval historian Alfred Mahan coined the term 'sea power' and developed his "philosophy of sea power" (Sprout, 1939). Meanwhile, the British political geographer Halford Johun Mackinder and the American political scientist Nicholas John Spykman sequentially developed the "heartland theory" (Mackinder, 1904) and "rimland theory" (Spykman, 1944). Arguably, sea power theory can be considered an integral part of realist IR theories (Wu, 2018). However, like other IR theories, sea power theory is in a process of evolution over time. Based on the Mahanian sea power theory, the modern sea power theory is taking shape. Therefore, it is important to critically overview the development of sea power theory.

2.3 Mahanian Sea Power Theory

The term 'sea power' was initially brought forward by American historian Alfred Thales Mahan in 1890 in *The Influence of Sea Power upon History 1660-1783*. He later published *The Influence of Sea Power upon the French Revolution and Empire, 1793–1812 (1892), The Interest of America in Sea Power, Present and Future(1897), The Life of Nelson (1897)* and *The Major Operations of the Navies in the War of American Independence (1913).* All of his books and articles revolved around a single theme – sea power.

2.3.1 Historical Context of Mahanian Sea Power Theory

Mahan's sea power theory is an argument based on the development of human civilisation, science, and technology, as well as a specific social and historical background. The increase of human understanding of the seas, the repeated naval wars, and human reflection on the role of sea power provided Mahan with a sound theoretical basis. At the same time, the then social environment of the United States encouraged Mahan to develop sea power theory.

Firstly, Mahan's sea power theory is based on the accumulation of the experience of human beings' exploration of the ocean. Before Mahan, the exploration of the ocean has been part of human history. In ancient times, people thought that the sea was the edge of the world, but human practice was constantly challenging this traditional belief. For instance, Phoenicians in ancient times "sailed throughout the known world" (Stavridis, 2018, p. 136). They sailed south around Africa through the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean, then returned to Egypt from west to east through the Pillars of Hercules. They also started from North Africa to reach Western Europe alongside the shoreline. Thus, people began to boldly claim that the Earth is round and the land is surrounded by the oceans. As long as people cross the ocean, they can reach the other side of the far continent. Subsequently, this conjecture was constantly confirmed by the practice of explorers. Christopher Columbus's 'discovery' of the New World (1492), Vasco de Gama's first touch of the Indian subcontinent (1498), and Ferdinand Magellan's circumnavigation (1519-1521) suggest that, since the oceans are the channels between continents, conquering the oceans means conquering more lands and the achievement of extraordinary wealth. Mahan's era is the period of vigorous development of the Second Industrial Revolution. Based on the progress of mankind's perception of the oceans, developments in the field of science and technology make people know better the oceans than ever before. Hence, Mahan's theory can be seen as the fruit of the mankind's understanding of the sea.

Besides the exploration of oceans, Mahan's theory is based on the experience of naval wars in history. In the years of naval battle history, people accumulated a rich experience of naval war. In the fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth centuries, European nations intensified their competition and control over the sea. Early capitalist countries, such as Portugal, Spain, and the Netherlands, with superior geographical conditions and naval power, turned the 'new continent' into colonies, which significantly promoted the development and prosperity of their motherlands. Portugal, which was a small nation in terms of land area, led in the naval exploration and became the first global superpower. Spain had the most powerful maritime force in the world during the 16th and early 17th centuries. As a small country, the Netherlands expanded by sea which resulted in hundreds of years of global colonial dominance by a powerful navy. To compete for world hegemony, these nations launched fierce naval wars. Portugal, Spain, and the Netherlands successively ascended the throne of the overlord at sea. Eventually, the United Kingdom adopted a successful strategy, defeated Spain, the Netherlands, and France in a series of naval battles, and took control of the seas. In Mahan's era, the capitalist nations fiercely competed for colonies as well as sea control. The emerging economies, such as Germany, Italy, and Japan, which were not satisfied with the existing pattern of colonial distribution, vigorously developed their navies to promote the redistribution of overseas colonies. So this rich naval war experience leads to the reflection of the sea power's dominance in the development of a nation, which is a central argument in Mahan's theory.

Rigorous research and contention on sea power's dominance in history is another foundation of Mahan's theory. "Mahan and his generation benefited from a rise in interest in naval history as a repository of experience to process" (Till, 2013, p. 56). While developing the then existing naval theory, Mahan also challenged the then 'widespread ignorance … about the role and importance of sea power' (Till, 2013, p. 57), because in the annals of world history, the struggle between sea power and land power always occurs unexpectedly. The account of the dominance of sea power went

back to ancient times. Herodotus's account of the war between the Greek city-states and the Persian Empire (449-478 BC), and Thucydides' account of the Peloponnesian War (431-404 BC) between Athens and Sparta recorded the first victories of sea power. The battle of Lepanto off the coast of Greece in 1571, as well as the triumph of the English navy over the Spanish Armada in 1588, are both examples of how naval battles proved to be turning points in conflicts. From 1270 to 1899, there were 17 books on naval thought published outside of the United States (Till, 2013, p. 53). Hence, Mahan's theory can be seen as the ground-breaking piece of research based on the heritage of the rich maritime culture and naval wars.

Mahan's sea power theory is also the product of the struggle between isolationism and imperialism in the history of the United States. At the end of the nineteenth century, the economic strength of the United States had caught up with and surpassed all the traditional capitalist countries at that time. Its demand for overseas markets was stronger than that of any other nation. However, the decision-making of the United States had been restricted by its traditional isolationism. The Isolationists believed that the United States should regard the sea as its natural barrier and not be involved in European disputes at any time. The reflection of this idea in the military field was the indifference towards the development of the navy. Despite the profound influence of Isolationism in the United States, however, there were still many people who believed that the United States should pursue an expanding overseas policy, participate in the division of the world, and actively seek foreign markets. The geographical characteristics of the United States, bordered by seas, determine that its external expansion must rely on a strong navy. Isolationism was so powerful that neither the government nor the Congress had the intention to invest heavily in building a strong navy. In 1870, the United States Navy had only 52 ships, ranking 12th in the world. Naturally, such a naval force was not able to support the expansion of the United States overseas (Gough, 1991). The Imperialists were crying out for a naval theory to convince Congress and the government that building a strong navy was essential for the future

prosperity of the United States. Initially, Mahan was also an isolationist. However, in the process of carrying out missions abroad as the commander of the warship 'Wachusett', he gradually turned into a firm imperialist, keen on promoting the United States to take the road of expansionism. Mahan criticised United States military reform, saying it was too slow and conservative and argued for the building of a strong navy as well as naval bases abroad. It was the fierce struggle between the Isolationism and Imperialism that provided a necessary precondition for the birth of the Sea Power Theory.

2.3.2 Mahanian Sea Power Theory

The sea power Theory established by Mahan can be divided into three parts: the first is the philosophy of sea power based on history, which is included in his most well-known work, *The Influence of Sea Power Upon History, 1660-1783 (1890)*; the second is naval strategy in a narrower sense, which is included in his book, *Naval Strategy (1911)*; and the third concerns the then geopolitical issues closely related to the naval strategy, which appear in many works on the subject of international relations and papers published in journals. Amongst the three parts, the first one – the philosophy of sea power – is not only the most influential, but is also considered the essential contribution of Mahan (Gough, 1991). For this thesis, it should be noted that the research focuses neither on naval warfare nor on naval tactics from a military perspective. Hence, the study rather prioritises the Mahan philosophy of sea power. But for the completeness of the theory, the thoughts of Mahan on naval strategy and other aspects are introduced briefly in the section as well.

2.3.2.1 Significant Influence of Maritime Strength upon Great Issues

The most influential argument of Mahan lies in his well-known connection between sea power and national power. Mahan (1890) claimed in the Preface of *The Influence of Sea Power Upon History, 1660-1783* that "the definitive object proposed in this work, is an examination of the general history of Europe and America with particular reference to the effect of sea power upon the course of that history"(p. iii). Mahan used

a historical methodology and made the connection between his own specific topics to general history (Gough, 1991). He made comparisons between the two cases of the UK and France — the former gained power and wealth through strengthening its sea power; at the same time, the latter transferred its strategic centre from the sea to the continent. He argued that sea power is of considerable significance to the destinies of nations. He ascribed Britain's success over its European rivals to its control of the seas, as well as France's decline as a result of its disregard of the waters. Hence, Mahan made a close connection between national prosperity and sea power by claiming "the profound determining influence of maritime strength upon great issues" (Mahan, 1890, p. iii).

2.3.2.2 Exchange of Products, Shipping and Colonies are Essential to a Nation's Sea Power

The seas of the world can be seen as a kind of highway which all nations can use. And in comparison with travel and traffic by land, shipping is easier and cheaper, especially "in a period when roads were few and very bad, wars frequent and society unsettled" (Mahan, 1890, p.25). But shipping needs protection, which can be considered a reason that a navy exists. Moreover, shipping and navy both need trade, refuge and supplies, so the birth and growth of colonies became necessary. That is the logic behind Mahanian sea power theory. He believed that sea power not only refers to the naval power used to control the sea but also includes the maritime trade and shipping. Hence, three things are essential to a nation's sea power; that is: "production, with the necessity of exchanging products, shipping, whereby the exchange is carried on, and colonies, which facilitate and enlarge the operations of shipping and tend to protect it by multiplying points of safety" (Mahan, 1890, p.28).

2.3.2.3 Six Elements of Sea Power

Mahan (1890) articulated six elements of sea power as follows: geographical position; physical conformation, as connected in addition to that, natural productions and climate; extent of territory; population size; character of the people; and character of the

government. As section 2.4 discusses in detail the elements of sea power, more detailed discussion will be found in that section.

2.3.2.4 Some Principles for Naval Strategy and Naval Tactics

Besides the 'philosophy on sea power', Mahan also established some principles for naval strategy and naval tactics. Instead of formulating them directly and systematically, however, Mahan scattered them across different case studies in his praise of the British Navy in contrast to his criticism of the French Navy. The naval thinkers and scholars had made great efforts to generalise from his works as follows: the navy is for the purpose of attack and attack is the best defence at sea (Livezey, 1981); the command of the sea is the premise of taking the initiative in war and the decisive factor in the war (ibid); to realise the command of the sea, the enemy fleet rather than merchant ships must be the target of the attack (Shi, 2012); and the concentration of heavy warships is considered "the ultimate decider of naval power" (Till, 2013, p. 57). Like Mahan's 'philosophy of sea power', his thoughts on naval strategy and naval tactics were highly influential and adopted by many navies, such as the United States Navy and Japanese Navy.

2. 4 Contention on the Understanding of Sea Power

As mentioned above, the most significant contribution of Mahan is that he made the connection between sea power and national power. However, instead of providing a precise definition of sea power, Mahan revealed the essence of sea power by commenting on various historical facts (Grove, 1991; Tangredi, 2002; Till, 2013). On one hand, Mahan (1890) claims that "the history of sea power is large, though by no means solely, a narrative of contests between nations, of mutual rivalries, of violence frequently culmination in war … largely a military history" (p. 1). On the other hand, however, he concluded that the elements of sea power – geographical position, physical conformation, the extent of territory, population, the character of people and character of government – have little to do with the military. As such, it is not strange that there are a myriad of interpretations as well as debates about definitions because, as Grove

(1991) argued, “sea power means different things to different people” (p.3). That is the reason why there is contention around the understanding of the concept of ‘sea power’. The primary debate surrounding sea power involves two perspectives: the narrowest and the widest sense. In the narrower sense, sea power can be seen as the command of the sea by using the military capability; in contrast, in its wildest sense, sea power is composed not only of the naval force but also of other non-military components. And if we compare these two competing perspectives, it seems that understanding sea power in its widest sense dominates.

2.4.1 Interpretation of Sea Power in the Narrower Sense

The interpretation of sea power in the narrower sense means to perceive sea power through its military nature. According to literature, it seems that support for this assertion is not strong. Modelski and Thompson (1988) argued that “in the classical definition, sea power means use and control of the sea. Use and control of the sea, or the denial of it to an opponent, requires naval forces…” (p.3).They used ‘sea power’ to describe “a state disposing of major naval strength,” and “the exercise of junction in the global system by the use of naval strength” (p.4). Grove (1990) also considers sea power as a military concept, a form of military power deployed at or from the sea. His explanation is based on Mahan’s assertion, “the history of sea power, while embracing in its broad sweep all that tends to make a people great upon the sea or by the sea … is largely a military history” (Mahan, 1890, p.1).

However, there were equally some changes in the interpretation of sea power in the narrower sense. Shi (2012) enriched the understanding of sea power theory while insisting on the military nature of sea power. Regarding the military aspect of sea power, Shi (2012) inherited Brodie’s views on naval weapons and equipment. Brodie (1943) noted that while military capabilities are used to control maritime lines of communication, no matter on land, at sea or in the air, they should be part of sea power. Shi (2012) went further, emphasising that besides warships, all the land-based, air-based and space-based arms and equipment deployed for the purpose of maintaining

maritime security, such as aircraft, the missile, and the satellite for military use, are to be considered an indispensable component of sea power. Secondly, Shi (2012) took international alignment as part and parcel of sea power. Sea power, as a tool for handling international relations with other countries, naturally has a direct and close connection with a country's foreign behaviour. Based on the two arguments above, Shi (2012) defined sea power in three dimensions. The first dimension is the "material sea power" (p.16), including all the warships, the arms and equipment deployed for the purpose of maritime security, and the military that go with these. The second dimension is the "conceptual sea power" (ibid), referring to a nation state's recognition of sea power, as well as the thoughts and theories on the practice of sea power. The third dimension is the application of sea power on the world stage, that is, the way and process by which countries combine the first two dimensions and use sea power to achieve specific goals in international relations. These three dimensions are inseparable from one other and together form a three-dimensional concept of sea power.

2.4.2 Interpretation of Sea Power in the Widest Sense

Apart from the understanding of sea power in the narrower sense, there is also an interpretation of sea power from a perspective broader than just a military understanding. The contemporary usage of sea power is a more inclusive and expansive concept than naval power alone. Surprisingly, amongst supporters, there are a lot of naval officers who advocate this position. As practitioners of military careers, they gave their own experience and came to more convincing conclusions.

Gorshkov (1978), the then Admiral of the Fleet of the Soviet Union and Commander-in-Chief of the Soviet Navy, claimed that the military aspect of sea power only works in the short term(Stubbs and Truver, 2007). Mullen (2006), the then United States Navy's Chief of Naval Operations, argued that sea power as a notion is defined too narrowly (ibid). Tangredi (2002) asserted that "the term *sea power* is not exclusively synonymous with naval warfare" (p.3), and distinguished 'sea power', which is indivisible with its geo-economic purposes, from 'land power' and 'air power', which

can generally be viewed as purely military terms. While admitting navies as the obvious element of sea power, Tangredi (2002) pointed out that "maritime shipping, seaport operations, undersea resources, fisheries, and other forms of commerce and communications through fluid media can all be seen as integral to a nation's sea power" (ibid, p. 3). Tangredi (2002) defined sea power from the perspective of sea power's capacity, materialising abstract sea power into three concrete abilities: the first is its capability to protect international trade and employment of resources; the second is its capability to maintain control of the sea; the last is its capability to influence affairs on land. As such, Tangredi (2002) gives an inclusive definition of sea power as

> the combination of a nation-state's capacity for international maritime commerce and utilisation of oceanic resources, with its ability to project military power into the sea, for the purposes of sea and area control over commerce and conflict, and from the sea, in order to influence events on land by means of naval forces (p.3).

Till (2013) defined sea power in terms of static and dynamic dimensions. The static dimension of sea power consists of "navies, coastguards, the marine or civil maritime industries broadly defined and where relevant, the contribution of land and air force" (p.25), which can also be seen as an 'input'. The input of sea power generates dynamic output consequences, which refers to "the capacity to influence the behaviour of other people or things by what one does at or from the sea" (Till, 2013, p.25). In contrast to a static input, the consequences or output are constantly changing. On one hand, he attaches more significance to the output of sea power than input. On the other hand, he emphasises that sea-based capacity determines the consequences of activities both at sea and on land (ibid).

Till (2013) emphasised two dimensions of the concept of sea power. The first is that "sea power includes the non-military aspects of sea-use (merchant shipping, fishing, marine insurance, ship-building and repair, and so on)" (p.25). The second is that "sea power is a *relative* concept, something that some countries have more than others. The real issue is a matter of degree. Nearly all countries have a degree of sea power" (ibid).

As such, the relationship between different sea powers matters more than absolute naval strength.

Till (2013)'s innovative 'relative sea power' is strategically significant in the real world. There are two meanings to the relativity of sea power. On one hand, as a clear majority of nations possess both sea power and land power, instead of easily but rashly claiming a country to be a sea power or not, Till (2013) suggested that "for sea powers, the maritime dimension will tend to dominate and to shape the way the state thinks about its land forces; in land powers the reverse is true" (p. 26). So the balance between sea power and land power is a key factor to consider regarding a nation's strength. On the other hand, the relative nature of sea power leads Till (2013) to the conclusion that "the strategic effectiveness of sea power depends importantly on the strengths and weaknesses of who it is exerted against" (p.26); in other words, sea power is decided by interaction between the competing rivals. This is a more inclusive perspective to review the sea power of different countries. It means the measuring of sea power is not a mathematical calculation which depends on the quantity of warships or airplanes, but the interaction among the strategic environment, the threats, and the sea power itself.

Parry (2014) defined sea power as "the combined investment in the sea of the various components and resources of a state or enterprise in the pursuit of favourable outcomes" (p.94). Based on the functions of sea power, Parry (2014) divided sea power into 'hard sea power' and 'soft sea power'. The former "is associated with the ability to threaten or employ violence and coercion as an instrument of policy" (ibid, p.9), while the latter "is generally associated with exploitation of the sea's resources and the movement of goods along sea lines of communication" (ibid). In essence, this categorisation reflects the different understanding of sea power: hard sea power can be seen as an understanding of sea power in the narrower sense, while soft sea power as an understanding in the widest sense.

Parry (2014) agreed on the understanding of the notion 'sea power' in the widest sense, since he noted that [sea power] "is too often viewed simply and narrowly as the benefit gained in a particular time and place by the possession and deployment of naval force"(p.97). However, while claiming that a state can have the two kinds of sea power at once, he emphasised that "soft power is usable only with the implicit or explicit presence of hard power, to prevent disruptions in the international system by states, criminals or others"(ibid, p.96). Therefore, Parry (2014) clarified the relationship between military factors and other factors, and emphasised the key role which the military factor plays in the development of sea power.

What made Parry's sea power thoughts distinct from other scholars is that he did not limit the owner of sea power to a nation state. "Any individual or group able to bring force or influence to bear at sea can be said to be demonstrating sea power in one form or another" (Parry, 2014, p.96).This can be seen as a breakthrough in the development of sea power theory.

2.5 Sea Power in the Era of Globalisation

Globalisation is an essential feature of the early twenty-first century. It is considered as primarily an economic phenomenon, which embodies "rapidly shifting flows of world capital, expansion of overseas markets and investments, the global connection of e-commerce and the Internet" (Tangredi, 2002, p. xxi). The outcome of globalisation is that transnational economic and technological trends make inroads into the autarchy of national units (Till, 2013). Hence, this "borderless world" shaped by globalisation keeps on challenging the external threat perceptions of a nation, that is a system-centred approach is replacing the "conventional, traditional, modern state-centred one" (ibid, p.29), as globalisation has become the defining aspect of the contemporary international system.

There can be no doubt, globalisation has great impact on the seas and oceans. One of the most notable changes is that, rather than being the medium for dominion in the era

of Mahan, sea and ocean have become "a flow resource — a means of transportation and exchange" (Bekkevold and Till, 2016, p.4). From this perspective, "the sea as a transportation route and strategic manoeuver space is comparatively more significant today than ever before" (ibid, p.308). Consequently, for the individual nation in the globalised system, contributing to collective efforts in addressing transnational challenges and preserving the international order at sea has become as important as safeguarding national interests.

Globalisation affects sea power in every aspect. Firstly, in terms of the nature of sea power, it is becoming less military. "Globalisation, and everything that goes with it, is creating a new paradigm of collaborative naval endeavour that needs to be set alongside the more competitive naval behaviours of the past" (Till, 2018, p.36). On one hand, as discussed in the preceding section, there are more non-military components of sea power. While naval forces remain the essential constituent, the geographical, economic, political, and institutional factors play an important role in it. Moreover, even for the military constituent of sea power, the naval force, there is also the non-military value in such a force. Military function, diplomatic functions and constabulary functions (Booth, 1979) are all part of the naval function, and sometimes they intertwine. In the globalisation era, however, the role of the diplomatic functions and constabulary functions of naval force have increased more rapidly than that of military functions. In comparison with an army and an air force, a navy has characteristics which are more suited to diplomatic functions. Wylie (1991) explained clearly that

> Only navies can have benign as well as an effective general employment in times of relative peace because, basically, they operate in the relatively neutral medium of the world's ocean waterways. Navies do not normally intrude upon the sovereignties of other and sometimes sensitive nations around the world (p.41).

Meanwhile, the increasingly non-traditional threats require a navy to take more responsibility in the constabulary domain in accordance with national and international law. From this point of view, sea power in the globalisation era has become less military.

The struggle in the military field used to be a zero-sum game – defeat the rival or be defeated. However, against the backdrop of globalisation, while the collaborative naval endeavours in the maritime domain increase, the competitive naval behaviour still has some way to go to vanish (Till, 2013). For sea power in the era of globalisation, there is "a common belief in the freedom of the seas and in the need to maintain a reasonable level of order and security in the maritime domain so as to benefit from the advantages that freedom of the seas grants states and economic agents" (Germond, 2020, p. 30), thus it needs to adopt a collective form to contribute to the global effort. As such, sea power in the era of globalisation is less a zero-sum game than ever. It is an incontestable fact that the difference in size and capability of every stakeholder is huge, but this does not mean that the differences are a barrier preventing the small countries from contributing to the more secure maritime order.

From the perspective of an owner of sea power, it is becoming less state-centric. Since the appearance of the notion of sea power, its main mechanism has always been the individual sovereign state. State-centralism used to be seen as one feature of sea power. However, with the advent of globalisation, sea power has changed in accordance with the changing international system. The first salient feature is that sea power is no longer the privilege of the individual sovereign state. And the reason for this change lies in the increase of the functions that sea power needs to fulfil in the era of globalisation. Besides maritime security operations, sea power currently also plays the role in "maintaining good order at sea and stabilising the liberal world order in the maritime domain" (Germond, 2020, p. 29). These functions require a kind of collective sea power which relies on cooperation at different levels, from international, regional to a transnational level. Hence, it is natural that a growing number of non-state actors have become the protagonists of maintaining maritime security and good sea order, while the role of individual countries is weakening. The international organisations, the regional organisations and the non-governmental organisations have set out to take

more responsibilities in the maritime domain. So being less state-centric has become an important feature of sea power in the era of globalisation.

2.6 Elements of Sea Power

This section aims to explore the elements of sea power. As mentioned in the preceding section, there are two kinds of understanding of sea power, one which equates sea power with naval strength, and one which has a more inclusive interpretation of sea power. By logical extension, sea power includes more elements than naval forces. Then, there are two questions needed to be answered. What is an element of sea power? And what are the elements of modern sea power?

Firstly, the elements of sea power can be seen as the preconditions and the components of sea power. On one hand, they refer to "the principal conditions affecting the sea power of nations" (Mahan, 1890, p.28). For instance, geographical reality can be considered a precondition of sea power since landlocked countries cannot be a sea power. On the other hand, they refer to the "constituents" (Till, 2013), which are supposed to make up a sea power, such as a navy. Therefore, the elements of sea power refer to all the conditions which enable the sea power to arise and develop.

Based on the existing literature, this section provides an overview of elements of modern sea power. Like the definition of the term 'sea power' which has evolved in accordance with technological and political developments, the content of this term is changing as well: some elements have become less critical or even no longer relevant, while some other new elements have emerged. Mahan's *Discussion of the Elements of Sea Power* in the very first chapter of his seminal work, *The Influence of Sea Power upon History, 1660–1783* (1890), can be seen as the starting point for a discussion of this theoretical issue. A variety of scholars and naval practitioners have subsequently developed it.

2.6.1 Mahan's 'Six Elements of Sea Power' (1890)

Amongst the six elements of sea power that Mahan (1890) includes in the opening chapter of his work, geographical position comes first. Some countries have greater geopolitical advantages. For instance, insular countries are in a more favourable position than continental countries, as the former can focus on the capacity building of their navy, whereas the latter have to accommodate the separate power on land and at sea. And an advantageous geopolitical position enhances a country's ability to manage effective attack and defence strategies. Another geopolitical advantage is control over the great thoroughfare of global ocean traffic. Last but not least, an extensive coastline and good ports are also important to a sea power.

The second element of sea power is physical conformation. Whether a country has a seaboard and numerous and deep harbours in part determines its strength and wealth, as they are linked to the potential for overseas trade.

The extent of territory is the third element of sea power. Simply, "It is not the total number of square miles which a country contains, but the length of its coastline and the character of its harbours that are to be considered" (Mahan, 1890, p.43).

The fourth element is the population size. Just as the extent of territory implies only the littoral area, the relevant people here refer to the "number following the sea, or at least readily available for employment on ship-board and the creation of naval material, that must be counted" (ibid, p.45)

The fifth element is the national character. As Mahan (1890) points out, "the tendency to trade, involving of necessity the production of something to trade with, is the national characteristic most important to the development of sea power" (p.53).In addition, an adventurous spirit of commerce is essential.

The last element of sea power in the Mahanian theory is the character of the government. The government plays a vital role both in peacetime and wartime: in peacetime, it needs to encourage its people to explore and benefit from the sea; while in wartime, it must maintain a cost-effective navy and naval institutions (Mahan, 1890).

Table 1: Mahan's Six Elements of Sea Power

Geographical Position
Physical Conformation
Extent of Territory
Size of Population
Character of the People
Character of the Government

2.6.2 Grove's 'Two Orders of Sea Power' (1990)

Given that "Mahan was at his most 'nineteenth-century' in outlook" (Grove, 1990, p. 226), Glove (1990) critiqued and deconstructed Mahanian theory by making the following observation. Thanks to technological progress (such as the invention of aircraft and rockets), geographical location is not as important as it was in Mahan's time; physical formation and extent of territory and population size can be seen as parts of economic strength; national character needs to be divided into three parts (economic strength, technological prowess, and social-political culture); and government encourages sea power through fostering economic growth or emphasising the defence and the navy.

Based on these observations, Grove built up a "new set of Principal Conditions Affecting the Sea Power of Nations" (ibid, p. 231). There are two orders or levels of sea power in Glove's theoretical framework. Economic Strength, Technological Prowess and Social-Political Culture constitute the three elements of the First Order of Sea Power. Geographical Position, Sea Dependence (in terms of seaborne trade, merchant marine, shipbuilding, fish catch, and offshore zone), and Government Policy and Perception comprise the Second Order.

In Grove's theory, economic strength is the most critical element, as it is the foundation of all other factors. It also leads to technical prowess, which is related closely to the social-political culture, as "certain societies and political systems are better at adapting to technological change than others" (Grove, 1990, p. 230).

While the relevance of the conditions of the First Order are emphasised, the conditions in the Second Order cannot be overlooked. Geographical position is still of great significance, as ~~the~~ land-locked states are not able to have a navy. However, sheer position is of less importance, and other geographical factors need to be comprehended within the concept of sea dependence. Mahan's Character of Government is changed to Government Policy and Perception.

Based on Grove's conclusion of the elements of sea power, there are two views that confront Mahan's perspective. While Mahan (1890) pretends that "purely military sea power can only be built up by an aggressive despot" (p. 88), Grove (1990) insists on the legitimacy of military sea power and emphasises the close association between the economic use of the sea and naval power, asserting that "as the economic forms of the sea use become ever more internationalised so the military use of the sea may have to become more internationalised too" (p.232).

Table 2: Grove's "Two Orders of Elements of Sea Power"

First Order	1. Economic Strength
	2. Technological Prowess
	3. Socio-political culture
Second Order	1. Geographical position
	2. Sea dependence in terms of:
	a) Seaborne trade
	b) Merchant marine
	c) Shipbuilding

d) Fish catch

e) Offshore zone

3. Government policy and perception

2.6.3 Till's 'Direct and Indirect Constituents of Sea Power' (2013)

Instead of the term 'element', Till (2013) uses the term 'constituent' to describe the "attributes of countries that make it easier or harder for them to be strong at sea" (p. 87). Firstly, Till (2013) noted that the constituents of sea power "are constantly on the move, shifting and changing in accordance with a variety of social, economic, technological and political developments" and "depend very much on a strategic context over which national governments have little control"(p. 87).

Secondly, Till (2013) divided the constituents of sea power into two parts: direct and indirect. This classification is based on the value and effect of a particular constituent. Direct constituents can influence sea power in their own right whereas indirect constituents can only influence by "contributing to the effectiveness of one or more of the other constituents" (Till, 2013, p.88). According to Till (2013), naval strength is the only direct constituent of sea power. Meanwhile, it serves equally as an indirect constituent, since it can influence all the other constituents of sea power.

Besides naval strength, there are other indirect constituents, such as maritime people, society and government, maritime geography, resources, maritime economy, and

technology, as well as the other means (Till, 2013). Therefore, while emphasising the key role of naval strength, Till (2013) had more inclusive thoughts on the composition of sea power. By connecting all the economic, political, technical, physical and institutional factors with the notion of sea power, Till developed the Mahanian sea power theory and brought it into line with the strategic context.

Table 3: Till's "Direct and Indirect Constituents" of Sea Power

Direct constituent	Naval strength
Indirect constituents	Population, society and government
	Maritime geography
	Resources
	Technology
	Maritime economy
	Other means

Based on this review of the elements of sea power in the literature, we can observe a clear trend in the elements of sea power. The elements of sea power are diversifying, that is, more factors are added to the list of elements of sea power. While certain factors remain in the list of the composition of sea power (such as naval force, geographical position and government policy) the development of a maritime economy and the progress of science and technology begin to play a more important role. And this thesis seeks to establish the essential elements in the formation of sea power.

Firstly, geography is still an important determinant of sea power. As mentioned above, sea power as a concept of geopolitical theory cannot be separated from the geographical factors it possesses. The role of geography is "to determine a state's relationship with the sea, its maritime importance, its vulnerability to threats emanating from seaward and its need for naval power" (Lindberg, 1998, p.38). Besides the value in the military domain, geographical factors are connected with the development of the blue economy

and indeed the overall economy. Therefore, geography is the prime element of sea power.

Secondly, the dependence of an economy on the oceans and seas constitutes another precondition of sea power. Sea power grows out of the need of peaceful shipping. As a resource, as well as a medium of transportation, the sea is more than ever before vital to economic growth throughout the world, especially to the countries which rely heavily on international commerce and shipping. Therefore, maritime economy is another essential precondition for the development of sea power.

Thirdly, political recognition and determination play a key role in the development of sea power. This means that "the sea became really important on the political agenda, in the popular culture, and in the collective imagery" (Germond, 2015, p.98). Therefore, a maritime government with marine strategic thinking is an indispensable prerequisite for sea power.

Fourthly, suitable organisational structures and efficient decision-making processes constitute an essential part of sea power. Maritime security is a comprehensive policy area that includes many policy fields. Suitable organisational structures can be seen as the glue which binds the different functions altogether.

Last, but not least, naval forces are still important as the vector of sea power. The concept of 'sea power' implies a military dimension, whether it is defined in a broad sense or narrow sense. While not the only element of sea power, naval forces are definitely an important component of sea power. As a matter of fact, the existence of naval forces is the vector of sea power and shoulders more functions in the era of globalisation. Therefore, naval forces can be considered the basic element of sea power.

In summary, the essential elements of sea power include the geographical, economic, political, institutional and military factors. All these elements are intertwined, influence and interact with one another to form a whole.

2.7 Conclusion

This chapter has sought to provide a theoretical framework of sea power. The notion of sea power is the key concept of the thesis. It was coined a hundred years ago, and still widely used today. As a branch of geopolitical theory, sea power theory focused on the abilities that a nation-state or the stakeholder possesses to maintain maritime security, exercise sea control and influence the events on land by naval means.

When defining the term of 'sea power', the literature highlighted that the interpretation of sea power in the widest sense might be more in line with the contemporary global environment. Existing research has sought to show the ambiguity in the definition of the term 'sea power'. This thesis favours the broad concept of sea power as "the combination of a nation-state's capacity for international maritime commerce and utilisation of the oceanic resource, with its ability to project military power into the sea, for the purposes of sea and area control, and from the sea, in order to influence events on land by means of naval forces" (Tangredi, 2002, p. 3-4). In the era of globalisation, the nature and actors of sea power are experiencing some changes, and sea power is becoming less military, less zero-sum game and less state-centric.

The elements of sea power, as the precondition and the components of sea power, are clarified in this chapter. This thesis incorporates some basic elements of sea power: geographical reality, economic dependency on the sea, political aspiration, maritime institution, as well as naval strength which are intertwined and altogether make up a sea power.

The final section of this chapter turned to how the research question outlined in Chapter One will be answered. Besides the definition, the elements of sea power also play an

important role in featuring the developments of sea power. When reviewing the different perceptions of the elements of sea power, the existing literature provides a useful starting point. The two approaches make a matrix. One approach describes sea power from the viewpoint of the generation of sea power, such as maritime economy, naval force, and marine geographical position. The other approach adopts a functional perspective: the control and use of the sea, projecting power from the sea, and influencing the events on land. As such, the theoretical framework for the study of the EU's sea power is clarified. The first step is to explore how EU sea power is generated by examining the elements which are the preconditions and components; in other words, by observing the EU sea power from geographical, economic, political, institutional and military perspectives. The second step is to examine by means of case studies how the EU practises the sea power in the different sea areas. Then the well-constructed matrix of EU sea power is applied: while the generation of EU sea power is demonstrated and analysed, the practice of the EU sea power is explored through four case studies. By an in-depth investigation of the 'input' and 'output' of EU sea power, the research question will be answered.

Chapter 3 Generating EU Sea Power

3.1 Introduction

As noted in the Chapter Two, answering the question of why the EU is a sea power depends on how we benchmark the term 'sea power' — whether it is a synonym for naval power or a broader geopolitical term of IR theory. Based on the overview and analysis in the preceding chapter, a modern sea power theory has been built. In this theory, sea power is understood in the widest sense, and can be seen as a matrix: on one hand, sea power is the "product of an amalgam of interconnected constituents that are difficult to tease apart" (Till, 2013, p.87), and these interconnected constituents are the elements of sea power; on the other hand, sea power is the capability that a nation-state or a stakeholder possesses to achieve military and political ambitions (Tangredi, 2002; Parry, 2014). These twofold perceptions provide the theoretical framework to review EU sea power. All the geographical, economic, political, institutional and military elements of the EU are amalgamated to generate EU sea power and the EU uses all these elements to achieve military and political goals. In order to confirm the EU as a sea power, the two preconditions must be clarified: whether the EU has all the elements of modern sea power, and whether it can fulfil all the functions a sea power nation should serve. By identifying the elements of EU sea power, the thesis outlines the process of how the sea power is generated at the EU level.

Having outlined in the previous chapter what sea power is and what the elements of sea power are, this chapter seeks to answer the first question: Whether the EU has all the elements of sea power, and how these elements interact to generate sea power? Given that existing studies on sea power are all based on an individual country, the assumption that the EU is a sea power seems challenging, because there are two questions which have to be answered. Despite the fact that the EU is an international organisation

composed of 27 Member States without integrated naval forces, the EU has all the essential elements of a sea power and succeeds in achieving its military and political goals by using the maritime resources and capabilities. And this chapter will examine the resources and the preconditions that the EU has; namely, the elements of the EU's sea power. The chapter empirically studies the preconditions, or the so-called 'elements', which provide all the material and aspirational conditions for the EU to be a sea power. Having examined the framework of the elements of sea power in the preceding chapter, it seems clear that the elements which affect the EU's sea power derive from five dimensions. Firstly, the EU is geographically surrounded by four seas or oceans. Secondly, the EU's integrated economy is heavily dependent on globalisation and international shipping. Thirdly, the EU's political aspiration is to be a global actor and security provider. Fourthly, the EU has established integrated cross-sectoral maritime institutions. Fifthly, the EU has made great efforts in the military field at both EU level and Member State level. These findings answer the question: How is the EU sea power generated?

This chapter is divided into six sections. Apart from the conclusion, each section presents one element of the EU's sea power in the order in which they are listed above. Section Two examines the shift of the EU's maritime status due to enlargement, pointing out that the EU's geographical reality is an intrinsic cause for the pursuit of sea power. Section Three explores the relationship between the EU's integrated and globalised economy and sea power, claiming that creating and maintaining good international order at sea is another reason for the EU to develop sea power. Section Four describes the EU's integrated cross-sectoral maritime institutions and how they work. Section Five elaborates the EU's naval capability, arguing that in the security and defence area the EU has made significant progress, which include a naval component. The last section concludes all the elements of EU sea power and reveals the generation of EU sea power.

3.2 EU's Geographical Reality

'Organic sea power' is a term coined by Till (2013, p. 87) to describe the nations that naturally develop sea power due to their geographical locations, such as the United Kingdom and the Netherlands. Obviously, geographical position plays a key role in one country's orientation to be a sea power or land power. For the EU, its geographical location ensures that it has the potential to be a sea power. While taking advantage of favourable geographical reality in international commerce and shipping, the EU has to strengthen its ability to deal with the problems encountered at sea and from the sea.

The EU is located at the edge of the European peninsula, the western part of the Eurasian land mass. Over four decades, the EU, as a regional organisation, has experienced five rounds of enlargement, from the six founding members to a total of 28 Member States[6]. The EU's enlargement is a process of territorial extension in all directions, stretching from the Mediterranean shores to the Baltic Sea, and from the Atlantic Ocean to the Black Sea. Vivero and Mateos (2006) argued: "the maritime aspect of this change (the enlargement) is, perhaps, one of the most significant, albeit not because of the increase in size caused by the enlargement, but because of the resulting shift in the EU's maritime status" (p.167) .

Map 1: the EU enlargement

(Source: Nations Online Project)

[6] In November 2018, more than two years after the United Kingdom referendum on EU membership, the Withdrawal Agreement setting out the terms of the United Kingdom's exit from the EU and the Political Declaration setting out the framework for the future relationship between the European Union and the United Kingdom were endorsed and approved by the European Council. The European Court of Justice ruled on 10th December 2018 that the United Kingdom can unilaterally revoke its intention to withdraw from the EU. The United Kingdom ceased being a member of the EU at 23:00 GMT on 31 January 2020.

Geographically, there are two outcomes from the process of the EU's enlargement. The length of the EU's coastline has increased from the original 13933.5 km to 53,563.9 km before the UK's withdrawal. In comparison, the length of the United States' coastline is 19,924 (www.cia.gov, 2020). Moreover, "the length of the EU's maritime border exceeds that of the land border" (Germond, 2015, p. 92). Obviously, the length of a country's coastline affects a country's strategic choices. A country with a short coastline and long land borders is unlikely to pursue sea power because the short coastline means a lack of harbours and ports, and long land borders imply a more complicated environment which is vulnerable to attacks from land neighbours (Wang, 2014). After several rounds of enlargement, the EU's coastline is ranked third in the

world. Figure 3.2 demonstrates the process of the EU's enlargement with the increase of the length of coastline in accord with the accession of Member States. This geographical feature offers the EU nations significant strategic advantages to develop sea power.

Table 4: Top 10 lengths of coastline in the world

(Source: www.cia.gov, 2020)

No	Country	Length of Coastline (km)
1	Canada[7]	202,080
2	Indonesia	54,716
3	EU	53,564
4	Greenland	44,087
5	Russia	37,653
6	The Philippines	36,289
7	China	32,075
8	Japan	29,751
9	Australia	25,760
10	Norway	25,148

[7] The Canadian Arctic Archipelago - consisting of 36,563 islands, several of them some of the world's largest - contributes to Canada easily having the longest coastline in the world.

Table 5: EU's enlargement and related changes to maritime status

(Sources: www.cia.gov, 2020).

Enlargement Round	Accession Date	Member States acceding	Length of Coastline	Extent of EU's sea border
Original Six	1950	Belgium	66.5km	Baltic Sea
		France	4,853 km (metropolitan France: 3,427 km)	Atlantic Ocean
		Germany	2,389 km	Mediterranean Sea
		Italy	7,600 km	
		Luxembourg	Landlocked	
		The Netherlands	451 km	
Northern enlargement	1973	Denmark	7,314 km	Baltic Sea
		Ireland	1,448 km	Atlantic Ocean
		UK	12,429 km	Mediterranean Sea
Mediterranean enlargement	1981	Greece	13,676 km	
	1986	Portugal	1,793 km	Baltic Sea
				Atlantic Ocean
				Mediterranean Sea
		Spain	4,964 km	
EFTA enlargement	1995	Austria	Landlocked	
		Finland	1,250 km	Baltic Sea
				Atlantic Ocean
				Mediterranean Sea
		Sweden	3,218 km	
Eastern enlargement	2004	Cyprus	648 km	Baltic Sea
		Czechia	Landlocked	Atlantic Ocean
		Estonia	3,794 km	Mediterranean Sea
		Hungary	Landlocked	Black Sea
		Latvia	498 km	
		Lithuania	90 km	

		Malta	196.8 km (excludes 56 km for the island of Gozo)	
		Poland	440 km	
		Slovakia	Landlocked	
		Slovenia	46.6 km	
	2007	Bulgaria	354 km	
		Romania	225 km	
Balkan enlargement	2013	Croatia	5,835 km (mainland 1,777 km, islands 4,058 km)	Baltic Sea Atlantic Ocean Mediterranean Sea Black Sea
Brexit	2019	Britain	- 12,429 km	

Another corresponding advantage of the long and tortuous coastline is the number of harbours and ports. Apart from the landlocked countries, the EU's new coastal Member States also have good ports. Amongst the top 20 ports[8] in the EU, Tallinn Port in Estonia, Riga Port in Latvia, and Constanta Port in Romania are located in the new Member States. They shoulder a huge quantity of the maritime transport in the Baltic Sea and the Black Sea. Since most of the new Member States are coastal countries, they have extended the EU's sea borders in every direction. As the EU has expanded to the east and the south, it has also extended to the sea. Thanks to the new coastal Member States, the EU succeeded in expanding its borders to maritime areas which were previously beyond reach, as such the Black Sea or the north of the Baltic Sea. Hence,

8 In 2018, the top 20 ports which handle gross weight goods are Rotterdam (441,474), Antwerpen (212,010), Hamburg (117, 621), Amsterdam (99,503), Algeciras (88, 645), Izmit (72,431), Le Havre (64,902), Valencia (61,972), Botas (60, 730), Iskenderun,Hatay (57,466), Immingham (55,617), Bacelona (54,560), London (53,196), Genova (51,570), Bremerhaven (51,160), Peirias (50,925), Bergen (44,314), Sines (44,310), Dunkerque (40,639), Goterburg (), (30,935),Tees & Hartlepool (28,386), Taranto (20,381), Tallinn (20,369). Sources from Eurostat.

the EU's enlargement has determined its geographicalal reality: "over two-thirds of the Union's borders are coastal and that the maritime spaces under the jurisdiction of its Member States are larger than their terrestrial territory" (Commission of the European Communities, 2006, p.1).

Additionally, the extension of the EU's coastline arising from enlargement led to an increase in the Exclusive Economic Zone. According to Article 56 of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, the exclusive economic zone is a sea zone which extends 200 nm (370 km) from the baseline, and a state has special rights regarding the exploration and use of marine resources, including energy production from water and wind (www.un.org, 1982). "The European Union has the largest Exclusive Economic Zone in the world—22 million square kilometres, including European Overseas Territories" (en.unesco.org, 2020). These are highly valuable assets that serve as a source of security and income for the EU. The EU's blue economy appeared for the first time in an official document of EU in 2012, referring to all the activities that are marine-based or marine-related, but not military activities (European Commission, 2012). "The 'blue' economy represents roughly 5.4 million jobs and generates a gross added value of almost €500 billion a year" (ec.europa.eu, 2020). Thus, marine and related industries play an important role in the economic development of the EU.

3.3 EU's Maritime Interests

Besides geographical reality, maritime interests are another factor that affects the development of EU sea power. Due to the EU's dependence on international trade and shipping, there is a clear need for the EU to create and sustain good order at sea. Moreover, the EU's economic strength and technological prowess can be seen as the precondition for developing sea power.

"Because of its effect on the state, and state practices, globalisation is the central fact of the strategic environment of the early twenty-first century" (Till, 2013, p.27). This

has serious implications for the countries aspiring to be global trade powers. And "globalisation depends absolutely on the free flow of sea-based shipping" (Till, 2013, p. 29). The countries that benefit from globalisation emphasise the need to maintain good international order at sea. The enforcement of maritime security and effective marine governance have been the aim of countries in the globalisation era.

For the EU, as the then HR/VP Federica Mogherini pointed out:

> [A]s a global trading power, the EU is vitally dependent on free, open and safe maritime shipping: 90% of its external and 40% of its internal trade is seaborne. The value of goods transported by sea is 1.8 times higher than that of goods transported by air and almost three times higher than that of goods transported overland (ec.europa.eu, 2017).

Against this backdrop, like other trade powers, there is a clear need for the EU to preserve good order at sea and to provide the optimum conditions for trade (Bekkevold and Till, 2016). However, "good order at sea cannot and should not be taken as granted" (ibid, p.7). There are two kinds of challenges to the current international order at sea: one is structural change, like global power shifts, changing threat perceptions, naval modernisation, and naval capability changes, and development of the Law of the Sea; while the other concerns non-traditional security threats, such as "piracy, terrorism, trafficking in WMD, sustainable over-fishing and environmental degradation" (ibid, p.7). Hence, due to the complicated situation with maritime security, the core aim of the EU is to protect the international commerce and shipping from the challenges and threats at sea.

Regarding international trade and shipping, there are two challenges: the sea line of communications (SLOCS)[9] and the choke points. Theoretically, ships can travel anywhere at sea. After many centuries of shipping, however, there are to this day some

[9] "In modern terms SLOs might properly be conceived as sea lines of commerce. Although the traditional and military term remains sea lines of communication (SLOCs), the civilian maritime community frequently refers to such zones of transit as sea lanes of communication". (Sources: Nincic, 2002, p.166)

constant means of travelling between different ports, called “sea lines of communications” (SLOCS). They are based on human experience of shipping and the study of “the prevailing wind, ocean currents and weather patterns, as well as the geographical configuration of the land and sea” (Parry, 2014, p. 56). And “securing sea lanes of communication is more than ever before vital to stability, economic growth, and development throughout the world” (Bekkevold & Till, 2016, p.3). There are also the choke points on the SLOCS. Maritime choke points can be defined as the narrow channels connecting two water bodies along widely used sea routes. For an increasingly globalised economy, maritime transport remains the most affordable means of transporting bulk goods. So the role of SLOCs and the choke points are vital. There are fewer than two dozen choke points located on the global maritime trade routes (See Table 6). Amongst them, eight are key including the Panama Canal, the Straits of Gibraltar, the Turkish Straits, the Suez Canal, the Straits of Malacca and the Straits of Dover.

Table 6: World Vital Chokepoints

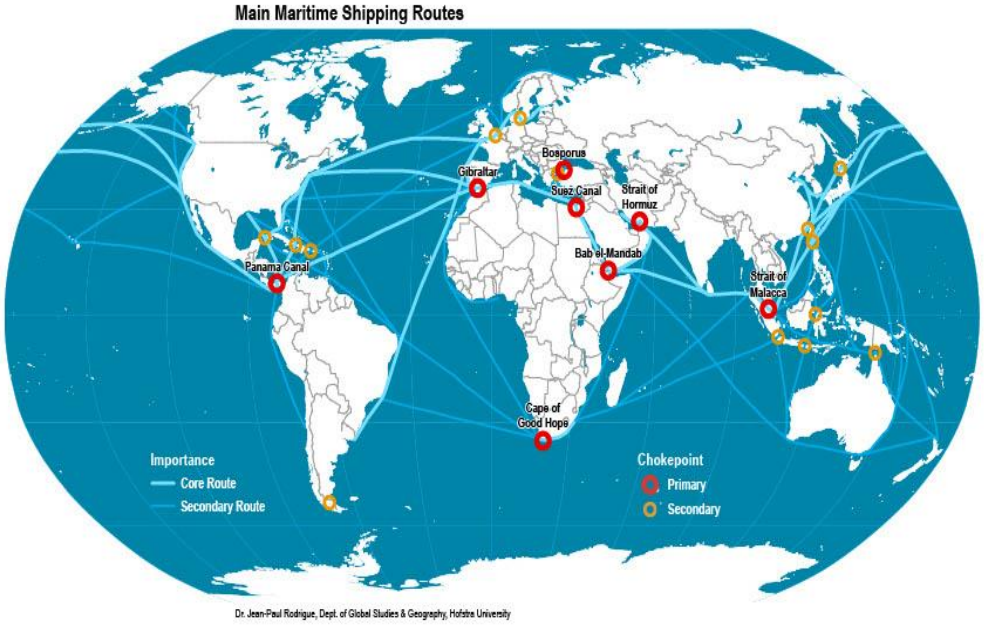
(Source: Nicnic, 2002)

Eastern Mediterranean And Persian Gulf	Eastern Pacific	Europe	Africa	The Americas
Bosporus	Straits of	Great Belt	Mozambique	Panama Canal
Dardanelles	Malacca	Kiel Canal	Channel	Cabot Straits
Suez Canal	Sunda Straits	Dover Straits		Florida Straits
Straits of Hormuz	Lombok Straits	Straits of		Yucatan Channel
Bab-el-Mandeb Straits	Luzon Straits	Gibraltar		Windward
	Singapore Straits			Passage
	Makassar Straits			Mona Passage

For the EU, there are three sea lines of communication that are of extreme relevance and importance to international trade and transportation. They are the so-called “southern corridor”, “eastern corridor”, and “northern corridor” (Behr, Brattberg and Kallio, 2013). The southern corridor is the world’s most important maritime highway since it connects Asia, the Middle East, and Europe. It starts from the Gulf of Suez, runs through the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean, then unites with traffic from the Persian Gulf, and continues into the Straits of Malacca. The eastern corridor begins at the Straits of Malacca through the South China Sea and around Taiwan to the East China Sea. The northern corridor can be seen as an alternative trade route through the Arctic region.

Map 2: Main Maritime Shipping Routes

(Source: Rodrigue, 2020)

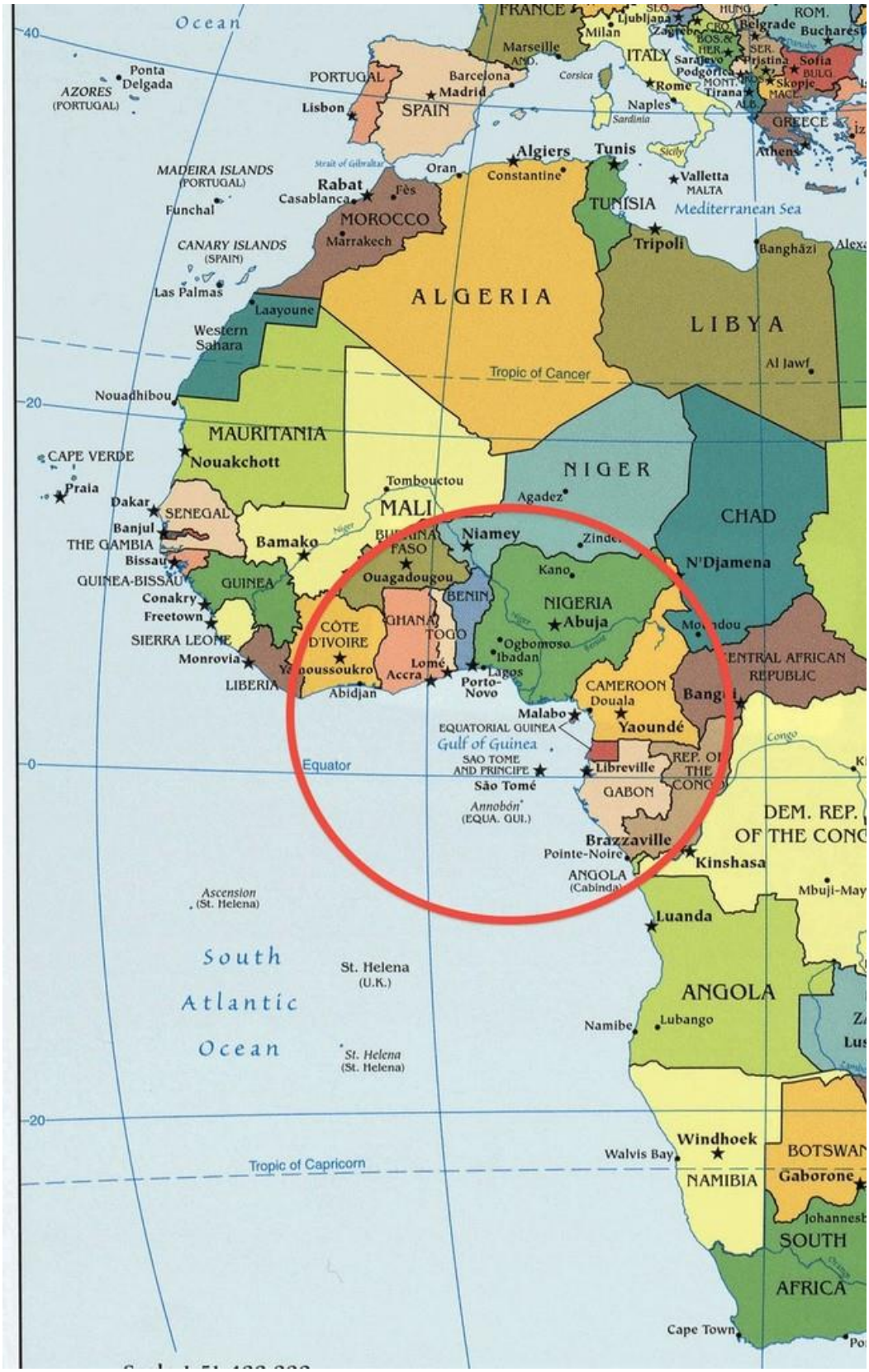


The ‘southern corridor’ and ‘eastern corridor’ as the essential maritime shipping routes are not only irreplaceable for the EU but also challenging to the EU. The potential threats come from both the choke points and the water through which the trade routes pass. There are in total four main choke points on the trade routes. They are the Suez Channel, Straits of Hormuz, Bab-el-Mandeb Straits, and the Malacca Straits. Due to the geographical feature of the maritime choke points, they are more likely to be affected by political and security risks, including temporary closure resulting from bad weather and climate hazards, security and conflict hazards due to war, political instability, piracy, organised crime or terrorism. (Wellesley and Preston, 2017).

Besides the increasing dependency on choke points, the EU has another concern – the bodies of water through which its trade routes pass. For instance, the Gulf of Guinea,

which is a vast maritime area in the west of the African continent, plays an important role in the EU's international trade and energy supply, because it is a key node area of maritime shipping routes connecting Europe and Africa. However, it is equally a hotbed of piracy and armed robbery at sea, oil theft and illegal fishing because of poor maritime governance by coastal countries. The case of the Gulf of Guinea will be addressed in Chapter Six.

Map 3: Gulf of Guinea (Souce: Dyriad Maritime, 2012)



Hence, due to its increasing dependency on international trade and shipping, the EU needs to take the maritime security issue seriously for its economic development.

Creating and sustaining good order on the sea can be seen as another precondition for the EU to develop its sea power.

3.4 The EU's Political Aspiration

Besides the motivation derived from its geographical position and the need to protect its international-trade-dependent economy, there is another incentive for the EU to develop its sea power: the political aspiration of the EU to play a fuller and more active role in the international field. If the EU's geographical reality and its dependence on international trade and shipping can be categorised as the material elements of the EU's sea power, the EU's aspiration for an identity as a global actor and a security provider serves as the ideational one. And as Germond (2015) claimed, "material elements of sea power are necessary but not sufficient if not backed by ideational ones" (p. 98).

Notably, the EU has aspired to be a global actor in the last decade. This claim is based on a critical review of the EU's core documents and official statements that focus on defence and security from Lisbon Treaty[10] (2009) until the issue of the second *EU global strategy* in 2016.

The adoption of the Lisbon Treaty is an important step in the history of EU integration because it "offers an opportunity for the European Union to take on a world role compatible with its status and aspirations" (Vasconcelos, 2010, p.3). With the introduction of the Lisbon Treaty, the European External Action Service (EEAS) was established. In doing so, the decision-making in external actions can be streamlined (Kelly, 2009).

Regarding the EU's security and foreign policy, official documents have referred to different policy areas regarding the EU's foreign policy and security and defence. For instance, *Guidelines on the EU's foreign and security policy in East Asia* (Council of

[10] Lisbon Treaty

the EU, 2012) can be described as the EU's overall strategy towards another region, while *European climate diplomacy after COP21: Elements for continued climate diplomacy in 2016* (Council of the EU, 2016a) can be seen as the EU's strategy regarding a specific issue. *A Shared Vision, Common Action: A Strong Europe, A Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign and Security Policy* (Council of the EU, 2016b) was a first attempt at carrying the EU into uncharted waters (Bomassi and Vimont, 2019), since it "nurtures the ambition of strategic autonomy for the European Union" (Council of the EU, 2016b, p. 4). All these documents articulate the EU's political aspiration to be a global actor. The then HR Mogherini explains "global" as such: "global is not just intended in a geographicalal sense. It also refers to the wide array of policies and instruments the Strategy promotes" (Council of the EU, 2016b, p.4).

Another aspiration of the EU is to become a security provider. First of all, the institutional mechanisms for a European autonomous defence already exist, due to Article 42 of the Lisbon Treaty[11], which provides for mutual assistance in case of armed aggression against the territory of an EU Member State.

Besides this clause of the Lisbon Treaty, the EU can be seen as a security provider in many respects. First, the EU's enlargement has been proven to be effective in spreading stability and security across the European continent. Second, through the CSDP, the EU has made significant progress in crisis management. Now the EU has a variety of instruments from humanitarian assistance and development aid to military operations and civilian missions (Drent, Landman and Zandee, 2014). And the EU has been involved in all kinds of security areas, such as "civil protection, health security, food

[11] Article 42.7 is the solidarity clause that states that if a member of the European Union is the victim of "armed aggression on its territory" other states have an "obligation of aid and assistance by all the means in their power." This article was first invoked at the request of the French government following multiple terrorist attacks on Paris. EU countries voted unanimously in favour.

security, infrastructure protection, cybercrime, and disaster relief" (ibid, p.7). What is more, the *EU Global strategy* in 2016 "broadened the EU's level of ambition beyond crisis management and capacity building to also include a thought-provoking concept called 'Protecting Europe'" (Fiott, 2020, p. 11).

Maritime security is part and parcel of the EU's political ambition. In 2014, the Council of the EU issued the *European Union Maritime Security Strategy* and the rolling Action Plan. In 2018, the Council of the EU revised the Action Plan. Mogherini (www.hstoday.us, 2018) claimed:

> With this action plan, the EU reaffirms its role as a global maritime security provider. It promotes international cooperation, maritime multilateralism and the rule of law at sea, in line with the strategic priorities identified in the EU Global Strategy.

The *European Global Strategy* of 2016 explicitly stated the relevance of maritime security to the EU:

> Connected to the EU's interest in an open and fair economic system is the need for global maritime growth and security, ensuring open and protected ocean and sea routes critical for trade and access to natural resources. The EU will contribute to global maritime security, building on its experience in the Indian Ocean and the Mediterranean, and exploring possibilities in the Gulf of Guinea, the South China Sea and the Straits of Malacca. As a global maritime security provider, the EU will seek to further universalise and implement the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, including its dispute settlement mechanisms. We will also promote the conservation and sustainable use of marine resources and biological diversity and the growth of the blue economy by working to fill legal gaps and enhancing ocean knowledge and awareness (Council of the EU, 2016b, p.41).

The introduction of the *European Union Maritime Security Strategy* and a detailed Action Plan amounts to a unprecedented step for the EU, as it "serves as [a] comprehensive framework, contributing to a stable and secure global maritime domain in accordance with the *European Security Strategy*, while ensuring coherence with EU policies, in particular, the Integrated Maritime Policy (IMP), and the Internal Security Strategy (ISS)" (Council of the EU, 2014a, p.2).

3.5 EU's Integrated Cross-sectoral Maritime Institutions

According to Germond (2015), "material and ideational elements of sea power must be supported by appropriate organisational structures and efficient decision-making process" (p.100). In other words, sea power would not have materialised without relevant institutional structures. In light of the EU as a unique regional and supranational organisation, it is vital to have consistent, cross-sectoral, and comprehensive maritime institutions.

On one hand, as the *European Union Maritime Security Strategy* noted, the EU maritime security sphere covers three existing EU policies, namely, the IMP, the ISS, and the CFSP (Commission, 2014a, p.4). "The maritime dimension of the EU's security extends beyond the institutional boundaries and responsibility of the CSDP; thus, its machinery is rather complex" (Germond, 2015, p. 101). The implementation of these policies relies on the different institutions as well as the Member States. Additionally, the supranational and intergovernmental dimensions of the EU maritime security require coordination between the Member States and the EU institutions as well as different sectors of the EU institutions. At the supranational level, trade, customs, and fisheries are the exclusive areas within the competence of the EU. In the case of naval operations, the Council plays an essential role. It means that all EU Member States have to reach a consensus on launching a maritime operation under the name of the EU. Meanwhile, the Member States are not compelled to participate in the operation (Germond, 2015).

There was not an EU cross-sectoral maritime institution at the beginning of the 21st century because the EU did not realise the importance of dealing with the maritime issue in a top-down way. "The Union started to manage its maritime assets only later and in a piecemeal way, either as subdivisions of sectoral land-focused administrations or in reaction to external crises" (Gambert, 2015, p.495). With the coming of the "global trend towards applying a cross-sectoral and participatory approach to ocean governance" (ibid, p.496), the EU decided to develop a comprehensive maritime policy. In 2007, the

Commission published *An Integrated Maritime Policy for the European Union* (also called the Blue Book). The introduction of this important document was based on awareness of the importance of the maritime domain to the EU. Firstly, the EU has realised that "Europe's maritime spaces and its coasts are central to its well-being and prosperity" (Commission, 2007, p.2). Secondly, the EU admitted that "all matters relating to Europe's oceans and seas are interlinked, and the sea-related policies must develop in a joined-up way if we are to reap the desired results" (ibid, p.2). It implies that the EU has fully realised the importance of the oceans and seas and has decided to adopt a comprehensive and top-down approach to deal with the issues at sea.

Based on these visions and recognitions, the EU developed three horizontal planning tools: a European network for maritime surveillance, Maritime Spatial Planning and Integrated Coastal Zone Management, and a comprehensive and accessible source of data and information (Commission, 2007). Hence, the EU aimed to "integrate horizontally the sector-based policies and activities regarding maritime affairs" (Germond and Smith, 2009, p.578). The EU has begun to increase integration in the important fields of maritime policy.

In 2014 the Commission launched the *EU Maritime Security Strategy* followed by an *Action Plan.* This Action Plan detailed the steps to implement the *Maritime Security Strategy* and pointed out the lead actor(s) for every activity. In 2018, the Council revised the *European Union Maritime Security Strategy Action Plan* and called on more actors to work closely together. Aside from the Member States, the Commission, the European Defence Agency, the High Representative and the EEAS, there are some new bodies and actors involved, including the European Border and Coast Guard Agency, the European Maritime Safety Agency, the European Fisheries Control Agency, the European Police Office, the European Union Satellite Centre, and the European Union Agency for Network and Information Security (Council of the EU, 2014b, 2018).

The European Council and the EU Council represent the Member States' national interests and power at the EU level and make collective decisions (Lewis, 2016). The Member States have to reach a consensus to deploy naval power. However, in practice, certain Member States, which are more powerful economically or militarily, can rally other Member States' support for their postures (Germond, 2015; Riddervold, 2018). "The Foreign Affairs Council (FAC) is the Council formation concerned with the CFSP/CSDP" and "makes formal decisions … on the launch of civilian and military operations" (Friis and Juncos, 2019, p.285). Within the Council, the highest military body is the European Union Military Committee, composed of the Chiefs of Defence of the Member States. The EU Military Committee monitors the command and the conduct of the three CSDP maritime military operations.

The European Commission, as the executive and administrative institution of the EU, plays an essential role in implementing and managing EU policies. As noted above, implementing the *Action Plan of the EU Maritime Security Strategy* covers several policy areas in which its competences vary. As Riddervold (2018) claimed, the Commission was not only "one of the main drivers' in developing an EU Maritime Security Strategy (p. 112), but does have "strong involvement" in the decision-making" (p. 119). The Commission developed a European common maritime picture by establishing EU agencies, such as the European Maritime Safety Authority, Common Fisheries Protection Agency, European Agency for the Management of Operation Cooperation at the External Borders of the Member States of the European Union, European Space Agency, European Environmental Agency, European Police Office, and European Defence Agency.

The EEAS became fully functional in 2011. The role of the EEAS is "to coordinate the diplomatic and foreign policies of the member states and, at the same time, to produce new and common position and policies … without infringing on the members' national interests and sensitivities" (Friis and Juncos, 2019, p. 286). Germond (2015) claimed

that the establishment of the EEAS has "somewhat blurred the distinction between the supranational and intergovernmental dimensions of the EU's foreign and security policy" (p.101). Moreover, the EEAS Crisis Response Department, which works with the relevant European Commission services and the EU military Committee, can respond in a timely manner to crises, including those at sea.

In summary, the EU's integrated cross-sectoral maritime institutions play an essential role in the generation of EU sea power, because they allow the EU to carry out the operations and activities related to maritime security as an independent country. In the three CSDP maritime military operations, the EU established an independent and completed command chain like a nation state's naval forces. In the other maritime security domains, these EU institutions and sectors rally Member States and implement the maritime security-related policies (Germond, 2015).

3.6 EU's Naval Capabilities

As noted in Chapter Two, the concept of 'sea power' implies a military dimension, whether it is defined in a broad sense or narrow sense. European sea power rests on politico-military pillars, which are represented by the EU and North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) (Stöhs, 2018). As the *Joint Declaration* (2016) claimed, "A stronger NATO and a stronger EU are mutually reinforcing. Together they can better provide security in Europe and beyond" (www.nato.int, 2016, p.1).

However, the CFSP, with its CSDP, is one of the most contentious policy areas for the EU. As Friis and Juncos (2019) claimed, threefold tensions are making the CFSP complex from the disagreements among the Member States. First, there exists tension between the intergovernmentalist and integrationist states. They have opposite positions on the permanent and institutionalised EU cooperation through the CFSP and CSDP. The intergovernmentalist and integrationist states diverge greatly on the role of the CFSP and CSDP for the Member States: while the former take the CFSP and CSDP as damaging their national interests, the latter take them as the natural extension of the

EU's function (ibid). Second, there is a tension between the Atlanticist and Europeanist states. This divisive focus concentrates on the attitude towards NATO as well as the United States presence in European security. While the Atlanticist states insist on the irreplaceable value of NATO, the Europeanist states prefer to develop the EU's own security and defence structure. Finally, tension comes from the divergence between the more interventionist states, such as France, and those states with a tradition of non-intervention, such as Germany. Given the intergovernmental nature of the CFDP and CSDP, the EU failed to establish a European Army. The intergovernmental character of the CFSP places it under control of the EU Council. "The CFSP's decision-making framework was to rest on the Member States' unanimity, giving each government the ability to veto any policy initiative or operation" (ibid, p.243). However, the EU has made significant progress in the security and defence area under the deepening of the EU's integration in recent years, especially after the *EU Global Strategy* issue in 2016. Moreover, all the progress has included a naval component.

The forerunner to the CSDP was the European Security and Defence policy (ESDP) which was established in 1999. The Lisbon Treaty replaced the ESDP with the CSDP. The EU attached great importance to capacity building and the potential use of naval forces from the beginning of the establishment of ESDP. From the outset of this policy, there has always been a naval component, as the Maastricht Treaty stated that the ESDP should cover "all areas of foreign and security policy" (Article, J.4.1, title V, TEU). The 1999 Helsinki Headline Goal set up the targets that the EU should be able to deploy forces "military self-sustaining with the necessary command, control and intelligence capabilities, logistics, other combat support services and additionally, as appropriate, air and naval elements" (European Council, 1999, p.2). It also encouraged the EU Member States to develop strategic sea lift capacity and amphibious capabilities (ibid, 2004). For "a better understanding of present and future maritime missions, requirements and capabilities" (ibid, 2007, p.6), the Council launched the "EU

Maritime Dimension Study" in 2007. The study pointed out the relevance of maritime forces as follows:

> Maritime forces have a role to guarantee the free use of the sea, which is key to the EU's economic prosperity and access to the areas of strategic interest. The utility of maritime capacity is its ability to use the unique access provided by the sea to enable movement, concentration of combat power, surprise or overt presence and transportation. It is therefore able to deliver the necessary effect to support the achievement of the EU's political strategic objective, either with a specific limited and focussed maritime operation or as part of a larger joint force. (ibid, 2007, p.6).

Given the intergovernmental nature of the CSDP, the *EU Maritime Dimension Study* was aimed at both the EU level and the Member States level. For the EU, this study "explore[s], within the ESDP mission spectrum, where maritime military capabilities could make a contribution" and "investigate[s] the use of EU Maritime Forces in a Rapid Response Capacity", while for the Member States, it "analyse[s] the effect of HLG 2010[12], RC 05[13], the resulting Progress Catalogue and the LTV process[14] on the future structure and shape of EU Member States maritime forces" (ibid, p.7).

In 2004, Headline Goal was adopted at the Helsinki Council. It stipulated the EU's ambition that "the forces start implementing their mission on the ground, no later than 10 days after the EU decision to launch the operation. Relevant air and naval capabilities would be included" (European Council, 2004, p.2). And it highlighted the importance of the strategic sea lift (ibid).

Financially, on 1 March 2004, the European Council established the Athena mechanism, which handles the financing of common costs relating to EU military operations under the CSDP. All EU Member States, except Denmark, contribute to financing EU military

[12] HLG 2010 referred to High Level Group (HLG) on Aviation and Aeronautics Research launched by the EU in 2010.

[13] RC 05 referred to the Requirement Catalogue 2005 (RC05), which was the task of the EU to ask Member States to what extent they could offer assets and resources to meet the total force requirement.

[14] LTV process referred to the Loan To Value (LTV) ratio.

operations[15]. The Athena mechanism covered the costs of the EU's three maritime operations — Operation Atalanta in the Horn of Africa, as well as Operation Sophia and Operation IRINI in the Mediterranean.

Following the introduction of the *EU Global Strategy*, the EU accelerated progress in the field of security and defence. To develop defence capabilities on a collective EU basis, it launched several specific defence initiatives such as Capacity Development Plan (CDP), Coordinated Annual Review on Defence (CARD), Permanent Structured Cooperation (PeSCo), European Defence Fund (EDF), Military Planning and Conduct Capability (MPCC), National Implementation Plans (NIP), European Peace Facility (EPF). Even though these initiatives "have not yet led to any tangible shift in the Union's capability base or readiness for deployment" (Fiott, 2020, p.3), they demonstrated the determination and willingness of the EU and the Member States to achieve a higher goal. There is always a naval component in these policy mechanisms contributing to the rise of naval capability. The EU naval capability also benefits from the improvement in the EU's military capabilities as a whole, given the interdependence of diverse military systems, including satellites and aircraft.

Among the EU's defence initiatives above, PeSCo, CDP and EDF have direct impact on the EU's naval capabilities, because

> the priorities set in the CDP would feed into the CARD, which would see Member States report on their capability plans, with EU institutions monitoring alignment with CDP priorities and identifying opportunities for cooperation among Member States … Then, PeSCo would draw on CARD results to plan and implement in support of the CDP. PeSCo projects in turn would at least partially draw on the EDF that would make EU funds available to support defence research and development, and ultimately capability development (The Military Balance, 2020, p.72).

[15] Due to the Danish defence opt-out, Denmark cannot participate in the elaboration and the implementation of decisions and actions of the Union which have defence implications. In practice, this means that Denmark is unable to participate in EU military operations or in the cooperation on development and acquisition of military capabilities within the EU framework, nor will Denmark participate in any decisions or planning in this regard. However, Denmark will not prevent the development of closer cooperation between Member States in this area.

Since 2008, the European Defence Agency, working with the EU Military Committee and the EU Military Staff, publishes updated CDP. “The CDP sets common capability-development priorities for EU members” (The Military Balance, 2020, p.72). It is “both a document and a process that clarifies existing capability shortfalls, plans for future technology trends, explores avenues for European cooperation and details lessons learned from the EU’s military missions and operations” (Fiott, 2018, p. 2). The 2018 EU CDP stipulated 11 priorities of which two related to the maritime domain. These are naval manoeuvrability and underwater control which both contribute to the EU’s capability to resilient at sea.

In December 2017, the EU established the PeSCo, which existed previously in the Maastricht Treaty. Due to PeSCo, the EU Member States can develop their capability through common security and defence projects. PeSCo aims to “provide a binding framework for able and willing EU Member States to work closely in the area of security and defence through common projects” (Nováky, p.2). Maritime projects represented a considerable proportion: amongst 34 projects approved in 2018, there were 5 projects related directly to the oceans and navy:, Harbour and Maritime Surveillance and Protection, Upgrade of Maritime Surveillance, Deployable Modular Underwater Intervention Capability, Maritime Unmanned Anti-Submarine System and European Patrol Corvette (pesco.europa.eu, 2020). There were 14 EU Member States involved in these 5 projects, and some of the countries participated in several of the projects. In addition, these projects “would be eligible for a higher rate of EDF finding than other projects (30% instead of 20%)” (The Military Balance, 2020, p.72). Furthermore, in view of the interoperability and functional interdependence of modern weapons and equipment for use at sea, on land, in the air and in space these weapons and equipment have formed a mutually supporting system. Naval weapons and equipment, as part of the overall equipment system, will also benefit from the improvement of the overall equipment level.

With regard to the naval capabilities of the EU Member States, 22 of the 27 have navies, maritime wings or maritime services[16] of different sizes. Historically, the naval forces of the European states were part and parcel of the overarching maritime strategy against the Soviet Union during the Cold War and each navy had specific tasks to fulfil (Stöhs, 2018). Sea control was the principle underlying the existence of NATO naval forces during the Cold War (ibid). When the Cold War ended, all these European navies faced transformation. On one hand, they benefited from the so-called peace dividend, undergoing a reduction in size and investment. On the other hand, they had to face the new forms of conflict involving the novel approaches to naval operations, such as military interventions, stability operations, and peace-keeping missions in distant regions (ibid). Despite the limitations of their financial difficulties, EU Member States have realised that "effective maritime security implies the need for closer collaboration" (McCabe, Sanders and Speller, 2020, p.5) and actively participated in maritime military operations led the EU.

Estonia is a noteworthy case. It is a small country on the eastern coast of the Baltic Sea in northern Europe, and became an EU Member State on 1 May 2004. With a GDP of $31,386b in 2019, Estonia was ranked 25th in the EU[17] (www.worldbank.org, 2020), yet, surprisingly, it is the Member State which makes the most effort in defence. Estonia's defence spending in 2016 accounted for 2.4% of GDP, which is much higher than the EU Member States' average of 1.4%[18] (www.europarl.europa.eu, 2018). Estonia is also one of most active countries on the world security stage. From 1996, this

[16] The EU Member States which have navies are: Belgium, Bulgaria, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Greece, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Spain, Sweden (The United Kingdom as a former Member State has a navy). Cyprus and Hungry have the Maritime Wing. Ireland and Slovenia have the Maritime Service. The landlocked countries – – Austria, Czechia, Luxembourg, Malta and Slovakia — do not have naval forces.

[17] Estonia's GDP in 2019 was above that of Cyprus (€ 24,565b) and Malta (€ 14.786 b).

[18] The countries which followed Estonia were Greece (2.1%) and UK (2.0%).

country participated in the US-led military operation 'Iraqi Freedom'; NATO-led international military operations in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo and Afghanistan; and EU-led military operations in the Horn of Africa, Mediterranean Sea, and Mali. There are a number of reasons for this. Estonians have reached a political consensus on participation in international military operations. The Estonian parliament "does not practise national caveats or have strict rules of engagement for sending troops to international military operations" (Mölder, 2014, p.69), and the Estonian public is generally supportive of their government's decisions (ibid). Furthermore, Estonia takes participation in international military operations as excellent opportunities to increase its credibility and gain recognition for its allies. In the maritime domain, Estonia possesses a very small naval force [19], with only four commissioned ships and displacement of under 10,000 tonnes. However, it participated in the EU-led maritime military operation Atalanta in 2010 (eunavfor.eu, 2010). Between 2010 and 2013, Estonia provided a Vessel Protection Detachment on the EUNAVFOR warships. Vessel Protection Detachment, as part and parcel of the EU's naval capabilities, made a great contribution in the fight against piracy in the Horn of Aden. Estonia's Minister of Defence noted: "Estonian vessel protection detachments have held the Estonian flag high with their professional performance and have made their contribution to this important European Union military operation. Participation in Atalanta has also deepened Estonia's defence cooperation with our strategic partners Germany and France" (www.kaitseministeerium.ee/en, 2013). In addition, it participated in the Operation Sophia and Operation IRINI. This example shows that, compared with military capability, a national government's political will is a very important factor. Through the CSDP military operations, the small EU countries also have the opportunities to contribute to the international security and stability domain.

[19] With only four commissioned ships and displacement of under 10,000 tonnes, the Estonian navy is one of the smallest navies in the world.

In summary, the military dimension of EU sea power is unique compared with that of sovereign states. In comparison to the individual state, the EU does not have an integrated naval force. However, its ad hoc security and defence mechanism provides it with enough potential to play an important role in the maritime domain. The three EU-led maritime military operations are emblematic of the EU's naval capabilities. When the EU Member States reached agreement in launching a maritime military operation, they showed they have the capability to act as one nation state.

3.7 Conclusion

As noted in Chapter Two, answering the question of 'Why the EU is a sea power in the making?' depends on how we benchmark 'sea power'. As the concept of 'sea power' has been clarified and the twofold criteria have been explained: on one hand, a sea power must have all the elements of sea power, including the geographical, political, economic, institutional, and military factors; on the other hand, sea power must have the ability to protect maritime interests, maintain good sea order, and influence events on land.

This chapter answers the question 'Why is the EU a sea power?' from the perspective of the generation of EU sea power. Like other sea powers, which are identified as sovereign states, the EU has all the vital components of sea power. Its geographical reality, maritime interests, political aspiration, cross-sectoral maritime institutions, and naval capabilities constitute the EU sea power elements. Firstly, after several rounds of enlargement, the EU, with the third ranked length coastline and largest Exclusive Economic Zone in the world, has become an 'organic' sea power from the perspective of geography. Secondly, this geographical reality allows the EU to develop the blue economy, as well as the economy highly dependent on international shipping. In order to maintain good order at sea and protect its maritime interests, the EU has the need to develop sea power. Thirdly, the EU has the political aspiration to become a global maritime security provider, and the political will plays a key role in the development of EU sea power. Fourthly, driven by the political aspiration, the EU has established

integrated, cross-sectoral maritime institutions covering different policy areas in the maritime domain. Finally, the EU's CSDP policy allows the Member States to contribute their naval forces to launch maritime military operations in the name of the EU, and this unique mechanism makes the EU different from other sea powers on the world stage. The intergovernmental nature of CSDP can be seen as a double-edged sword. Obviously, it seems a limitation that prevents the EU from being involved in the higher end of the operational spectrum due to some capability gap, such as the lack of strategic airlift. However, it provides opportunities for the individual European navies, especially for the 'small' navies, to play a more significant role than its capabilities through cooperation.

Based on the analysis of the EU's sea power elements, it becomes apparent that the EU has all the elements that constitute a sea power. However, sea power is not merely a mix of all the material and immaterial elements. It is also an art to use these elements to achieve certain purposes, such as to protect international commerce and shipping, to maintain good order at sea, as well as to influence the events on land by the events at sea. Therefore, the next four chapters will focus on the practice of the EU sea power on the world stage.

Chapter 4 The Practice of EU Sea Power in the Horn of Africa: Taking EUNAVFOR Somalia as a Case study

4.1 Introduction

Having clarified the elements of the EU sea power, this chapter explores the practice of EU sea power through a case study. As mentioned in Chapter Two, sea power can be analysed as a matrix: it is a combination of maritime elements and maritime abilities. On one hand, sea power comprises all the essential economic, political, institutional and military components. On the other hand, sea power can be regarded as a combination of capacities (Tangredi, 2002; Parry, 2014). The elements of the EU sea power were analysed and outlined in Chapter Three. Consequently, the EU sea power practice will be examined through case studies in the following chapters.

This chapter focuses on the EU's first maritime military operation – Operation Atalanta. It is composed of five sections. Section One is the introductory section. Section Two introduces the background and context of Somali piracy and Operation Atalanta, including the origin of the piracy off the coast of Somalia, the relevant UN Security Council Resolutions, and the EU decision–making process. Section Three focuses on the operational factors of Operation Atalanta under the strategic framework of 'ends, ways and means. Section Four assesses the outcome of Operation Atalanta. The last section concludes by clarifying the EU's abilities in the practice of sea power in the Horn of Africa.

4.2 Context and background

The Operation Atalanta was the EU's first naval CFSP mission. It was launched on 10 December 2008 by the Council of the EU, and it continues to this day. Operation Atalanta is part of an overall strategy which the EU developed to pursue a

comprehensive approach to solve the problem of Somali piracy and the broader maritime security of the Western Indian Ocean.

4.2.1 Origin of Somali Piracy

Modern piracy is far from a recent phenomenon and has been active over the last decade in the South China Sea, the seas off West Africa, and in the Caribbean (www.unodc.org, 2020). From 2008 onward, Somali piracy became a severe hazard for the international community.

Somalia is situated in the Horn of Africa and has the longest coastline on the African continent. The then Transitional Federal Government of the Republic of Somalia is "internationally recognised but largely ineffective" (Ginkel and Putten, 2010, p.2)[20]. Due to two decades of civil war and lack of governance, it has been labelled as one of the worst 'failed states' in the world.

The term 'Somali piracy' refers to the "activities of Somalia–based groups who aim to generate income by attacking ships at sea" (ibid, p.2). The attackers are gangs of private marauders who board the merchant vessels sailing in the Gulf of Aden or the Western Indian Ocean, take the crews hostage, and blackmail the ship–owners. "Between 2005 and 2013, 179 ships were hijacked off the Horn of Africa, costing approximately $400m in ransoms alone" (Dombrowski and Reich, 2018, p.4).

Besides the direct economic costs of piracy, there was a profound impact on global trade and security. From the commercial perspective, the waterways through the Horn of Africa and the Gulf of Aden play a vital role in the worldwide transport of goods and energy. Piracy in this maritime area severely challenged these international trade and energy flows. From the security perspective, piracy has become a breeding ground for

[20] In 2012, the Federal Government of Somalia replaced the Transitional Federal Government.

other maritime security threats, such as the smuggling of arms, drugs, and people. Moreover, piracy often intertwines with terrorism, as piracy brings funds and arms, which are essential for terrorists. For instance, in September 2008, Somali pirates captured a Ukrainian cargo ship carrying arms and ammunition, including even 33 Russia–made tanks (Rice, 2008). From the humanitarian perspective, piracy has also captured vessels providing humanitarian aid for displaced populations. It exacerbated the internal turbulence of Somalia. In summary, Somali piracy has become one of the most severe dangers to the international community.

4.2.2 Relevant UN Security Council Resolutions

To ensure the safety of humanitarian aid, to protect the international trade waterways, and combat piracy and other illegal activities in this area, the UN Security Council passed three successive *Resolutions – 1814, 1816 and 1838* – which demand nations and international organisations take concerted action.

In *UNSC Resolution 1814*, the Security Council called upon

> states and regional organizations … to take action to protect shipping involved with the transportation and delivery of humanitarian aid to Somalia and United Nations–authorized activities … (www.securitycouncilreport.org, 2008).

In UNSC Resolution 1816, the Security Council affirmed that "international law … sets out the legal framework applicable to combatting piracy and armed robbery, as well as other ocean activities" (ibid, 2008).

In *UNSC Resolution 1838*, the Security Council commended

> the contribution made by some States since November 2007 to protect the World Food Programme (WFP) maritime conveys, and the establishment by the European Union of a coordination unit with the task of supporting the surveillance and protection activities carried out by some Member States of the European Union off the coast of Somalia, and the ongoing planning process towards a possible European Union naval operation …" (ibid, 2008).

4.2.3 EU's Decision–Making Process

To launch a counter–piracy maritime operation off the Somali coast needs EU Member States' unanimity. Mobilised by France, which was then holding the EU's presidency, together with Spain, the idea of launching an autonomous EU maritime military operation was supported by all Member States (Riddervold, 2018). There were two reasons for this decision: one for validity, the other geopolitical.

On one hand, although the US had established the Combined Maritime Task Force CTF–151 and NATO had launched the humanitarian operation 'Allied Provider', the EU Member States formulated an autonomous maritime military operation because they believed that,

> The EU is a political organisation and could therefore take a more comprehensive approach, coordinate policies across different policy areas, and draw on tools linked to policy areas outside of the CFSP framework to establish agreements with third countries in the region (ibid, p.212).

On the other hand, from the geostrategic perspective, the Western Indian Ocean centred on the Somali coast has vital security interests for the EU and its Member States. The area is situated in the international ocean shipping channel and has vital strategic interests. Given the heavy dependence of the EU and its Member States on international trade and overseas energy supply, this area's safety affects the energy security and economic development of the EU. Furthermore, piracy intertwines with other maritime non–traditional security threats, including the smuggling of weapons and drugs destined for the European continent, and the linkage between piracy and terrorism, so cumulatively all these maritime threats eventually challenge the security and stability of the EU and its Member States. Thus, Somali piracy, even far away from Europe, has a direct and vital connection to the EU and the Member States, so the EU's decision to launch the maritime military anti–piracy operation has important geostrategic significance.

4.3 'Ends, Ways and Means' of Operation Atalanta

'Ends, ways and means' is a strategic framework developed by Arthur F. Lykke Jr. "For Lykke strategy is a coherent expression of a process that identifies the ends, ways and means designed to achieve a certain goal" (Eikmeier, 2007, p.63). "Ends are the objectives or desired outcomes of a given strategy" (ibid). "Ways are actions. They are the methods and process executed to achieve the ends" (ibid). "Means are the resources required to execute the way" (ibid). Therefore, "a strategy is balanced and entails little risk if the selected way (method) is capable and has sufficient means (resources) to obtain the desired end (objective)" (ibid).

As a long–lasting maritime military operation, Operation Atalanta is examined under this framework of 'end, ways and means'. In other words, the following questions are answered: What were the aims of Operation Atalanta? How did it operate? With which resources and assets?

4.3.1 Ends to Operate

The objectives of Operation Atalanta were articulated in the *Council Joint Action 2008/851/CFSP of 10 November 2008 on a European Union military operation to contribute to the deterrence, prevention and repression of acts of piracy and armed robbery off the Somali coast* (Council of the EU, 2008).

There are three objectives for Operation Atalanta. The first is to protect the vessels in the operating area, including Somali coastal territory and internal waters and the maritime areas off the coasts of Somalia and neighbouring countries within the region of the Indian Ocean. The priority for the protection mission of Operation Atalanta was the vessels of the United Nations WFP that were delivering food aid to displaced persons in Somalia. The second objective is to protect other vulnerable vessels cruising off the Somali coast were within their protection (Council of the EU, 2008). The third objective is to help to address the root causes of piracy and its networks as part of the EU's integrated approach to Somalia.

<u>Objective One</u>: To protect the vessels of WFP delivering food aid to displaced persons in Somalia

Before 1991 when the Siad Barre regime was overthrown, Somalia had experienced years of civil war, which caused the disastrous 1992–1993 famine (Maxwell and Fitzpatrick, 2012). "By 2009, more than three million people were affected by the combination of drought, conflict, and high food price, and required immediate food assistance" (ibid, p.6). Therefore, food aid was crucial to the survival of the displaced people in Somalia. In 2008–2009, the volume of food aid for Somalia reached its peak since the 1992–1993 famine (ibid). In 2011, drought, rising food prices, and the conflict led to another famine in Somalia.

Piracy is not a new phenomenon in Somalia. Furthermore, misery and unemployment pushed more Somalis into the business of piracy. In June 2005, the pirates off the Somalia coast hijacked a vessel with WFP relief food for 28,000 victims of the Indian Ocean tsunami on–board and held it for more than 100 days in Somali waters (news.un.org, 2007). In October, another UN–chartered vessel, with an 850–tonne cargo of food aid, was hijacked (ibid). Between 2005 and 2007, there were four UN-chartered vessels hijacked by Somalia pirates (ibid) and the WFP temporarily had to suspend deliveries of food aid by sea. This situation undermined the delivery of relief food to vulnerable people in Somalia and further worsened the prevailing precarious humanitarian situation. Consequently, the EU set the protection of UN–chartered vessels as their priority and the principal objective of Operation Atalanta.

<u>Objective Two</u>: To protect the vulnerable vessels cruising off the Somalia coast

The Horn of Africa connects the Suez Canal in the north to Socotra in the south and the more expansive Indian Ocean in the east. This geographical reality makes it one of the busiest maritime trade routes, through which 30 per cent of world oil and 20 per cent of global trade pass. Somali pirates were responsible for no fewer than 939 attacks out

of the 3,093 total attacks recorded globally between 2007 and 2016 (www.icc-ccs.org, 2006–2017). Unlike other piracy and armed robbery, the Somali pirates exploit loopholes in Somalia law and kidnap the crew members in exchange for ransom, something which is much more profitable than just stealing the goods (Kaunert and Zwolski, 2014). Therefore, to protect the vulnerable vessels cruising off the Somali coast is of great significance, no matter whether from a humanitarian, economic, or security perspective.

Objective Three: To help to address the root causes of piracy.

According to Kaunert and Zwolski(2014), the EU's response to the piracy off the Horn of Africa can be classified under three categories according to their different terms. Operation Atalanta's protection mission is the immediate and medium-term response to piracy off the Horn of Africa, while addressing the root causes of piracy is the EU's long-term response. As the largest donor of official development assistance to Somalia, the EU adopted a comprehensive approach to solving this country's problem. Economically, the EU provided humanitarian and development aid. Simultaneously, politically, the EU supported the UN's Rule of Law programme in Somalia. In the security field, the EU launched several missions, which aimed to strengthen the building and training of the coastal police guard of Somalia and related countries in the neighbourhood.

As part and parcel of the EU's comprehensive approach to Somalia, Operation Atalanta is not only the crucial element but also the precondition for other steps. Piracy is hugely profitable for unemployed Somali people. According to the investigation of the International Expert Group on Piracy off the Somali Coast, in 2008 one pirate could earn between US$6,000 to US$10,000 for a ransom of US$1 million. This sum is equal to two to three years' salary on average from working a legal job (Kaunert and Zwolski, 2014). Therefore, deterring unemployed Somali people from engaging in piracy was regarded as the first step to enhancing this country's economy.

From 2009, complementary missions were incorporated into the Operation Atalanta's mandate. On one hand, apart from the vessels of WFP, the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) was added to the mission list of Operation Atalanta. AMISOM had been established in 2007 as per the *UN Security Council Resolution 2372(2017)* and mandated to "perform the police, civil and military operations at all levels as well as stabilization, reconciliation and peace building in Somalia" (Jama and Katman, p.227). On the other hand, the mandate of operation Atalanta expanded to "the monitoring of fishing activities off the coast of Somalia" (Council of the EU, 2014, p.2).

Having clarified how the EU sea power is generated, Operation Atalanta as a classic case, demonstrated the 'output' of the EU's sea power. Objective One and objective Two of Operation Atalanta (which is to protect the vessels of WFP, of AMISOM, and the other vessels), show the EU's determination to exercise its capacity for international maritime commerce and utilisation of the marine resource, as well as the ability to project military power into the sea. And the third objective of Operation Atalanta (which is to address the root cause of the piracy) is compelling evidence of the EU's intention to influence events on land through naval forces. Therefore, the EU has every confidence that its sea power will fulfil the potential to maintain maritime security in the Horn of Africa and to influence events on Somalian territory through Operation Atalanta.

Having established why the EU launched Operation Atalanta, the next step is to clarify the 'ways' of Operation Atalanta – the methods and process which the EU executed to achieve the ends.

4.3.2 Ways to Operate

According to the framework 'end, ways and means', "ways are actions. They are the methods and process executed to achieve the ends" (Eikmeier, 2007, p.63). As argued

in the preceding section, the ends of Operation Atalanta are to protect the vessels off the Horn of Africa and address the root cause of the piracy.

The problem against which the EU naval force fights is piracy[21] and armed robbery[22] off the Somali coast. The Somali pirates operate by diesel/petrol–powered skiffs, use ladders to climb onto the target vessel, and use automatic weapons and a Rocket Propelled Grenade to kidnap the crew members and take command of the ship. Even when poorly equipped, their knowledge of the sea allows them to hijack a vessel in just a few minutes. From the tactical perspective, this represents classic asymmetric warfare. One side has the most sophisticated equipment and highly trained combatants, while the other side has only basic craft and desperate pirates. However, the EU's counter–piracy operation is deployed in a maritime area of 4,700,000 square nautical miles (approximately 8,700,000 square kilometres) covering the Southern Red Sea, the Gulf of Aden, and a large part of the Indian Ocean. It would be difficult to deploy any operation over such a vast sea to protect travelling vessels and deter, prevent, and repress piracy and armed robbery.

Facing such a particular enemy in such a challenging theatre of operations, Operation Atalanta adopted the following methods and process:

4.3.2.1 To protect the WFP vessels and AMISOM ships by escorting and by autonomous Vessel Protection Detachment

To protect the vessels of WFP and AMISOM is the primary task of Operation Atalanta. During the period of operation, there were two methods that the EU Naval Force adopted. On one hand, the EU deployed the warship escorting the vessels of WFP and AMISOM. For instance, in December 2008, the Royal Navy's Frigate HMS

[21] Maritime piracy is an act of violence perpetrated against a ship outside of any state's jurisdiction (over 12 nautical miles off the coast).

[22] Acts of violence against ships within a state's territorial waters are described as armed robbery at sea.

NORTHUMBERLAND completed the EU's first WFP vessel protection by safely escorting the MV SEMLOW from Mombasa in Kenya to the Somali port of Mogadishu. In one week, it escorted four different WFP ships into three other Somali ports (eunavfor.eu, 2009). And from 2009 till mid–2012, all WFP ships carrying aid to Somalia were escorted by EU Naval Force warships.

On the other hand, since mid–2012, a second method was added whereby some WFP vessels were protected by the Autonomous Vessel Protection Detachment, an armed security team on board provided by EUNAVFOR (Šoškić, Radojević and Komazec, 2014). The trained elite military group is stationed directly on the ship in need of protection. They protect against reasonably foreseeable threats, detect and respond to threats effectively, carry out the vessel's security operations, deter the attacker, deny access to personnel, potential hostages, or critical aspects of the ship, and detain or destroy a potential attacker. Due to their existence, the boat, its crew, and the assets on board are protected (ibid).

The EU's achievement in protecting the WFP vessels and AMISOM ships proved the unquestioned success of Operation Atalanta. Since the launch of the Operation Atalanta in 2008, it has had a total success rate in protecting WFP vessels delivering food and aid to the Somali people and AMISOM shipments critical to the African Union's successful operation in Somalia (eunavfor.eu, 2020). It has protected some 1473[23] WFP and 704 AMISOM vessels, consequently delivering safely 2,177,155 metric tonnes of food by the WFP to Somalia.

[23] This number is based on the "Key Facts and Figures", calculated by the author. see: European Union Naval Force Operation ATALANTA. [online] Available: https://eunavfor.eu, accessed 1 August 2020.

4.3.2.2 To protect other vulnerable shipping by escorting within the Internationally Recommended Transit Corridor and the High Risk Area

Apart from the protection of WFP vessels and AMISOM ships, to protect the vulnerable ships off the Somalia coast is also in the mandate of Operation Atalanta. To effectively protect the ships and deter piracy acts, the EUNAVFOR cooperated with shipping industries worldwide. On 1 February 2009, EUNAVFOR, the International Maritime Board, the United Kingdom Maritime Trade Organisation, and the American Maritime Liaison Office reached an agreement which established an 'Internationally Recommended Transit Corridor'. This constituted a navy–patrolled route through the Gulf of Aden, measuring 490 nautical miles (910 km) long and 20 nautical miles (37 km) wide. Vessels were encouraged to register their voyages through the region with the Maritime Security Centre – Horn of Africa (eunavfor.eu, 2011). The High Risk Area includes the Gulf of Aden, Somali Basin, and the Indian Ocean.

The EU and other naval forces' warships perform escort duties in the Internationally Recommended Transit Corridor and the High-Risk Area to ensure the safety of shipping. For instance, on 24 July 2009, EUNAVFOR German Maritime Patrol Aircraft discovered a suspicious skiff with five suspected pirates on board in the Internationally Recommended Transit Corridor between Bossasso and Al Mukalla. The EUNAVFOR Italian warship MAESTRALE together with the NATO Turkish warship GEDIZ and the Indian warship GODAVARI worked closely together to deter a possible pirate attack (eunavfor.eu, 2009).

With the assistance of other actors in the Horn of Africa, Operation Atalanta had great success in protecting vulnerable ships and deterring acts of piracy. "At the height of Somali piracy in January 2011, 736 hostages and 32 ships were being held by pirates. By October 2016 that number has dropped to no hostages and ships being held" (eunavfor.eu, 2020).

4.3.2.3 To conduct reconnaissance and surveillance operations

Reconnaissance and surveillance operations play a vital role in the fight against piracy. Apart from the system of reconnaissance and surveillance on board, the primary reconnaissance and surveillance missions are carried out by the Maritime Patrol and Reconnaissance Aircraft which fly over the theatre of operation, detect suspicious skiffs, and guide warships to their position as well as collect intelligence on specific areas. The aircraft are equipped with advanced surveillance systems that significantly enhance EUNAVFOR's Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance capability in the Somali Basin and the Gulf of Aden. Their speed and high endurance level make them a key asset in the vast area (eunavfor.eu, 2010). Take, for example, on 2 and 3 November 2010, the EUNAVFOR warship SPS GALICIA, with the support of Maritime Patrol and Reconnaissance Aircraft, located and disrupted two Pirate Action Groups comprising two skiffs with eleven suspected pirates on board (eunavfor.eu, 2010).

On 2 November, a merchant vessel was attacked – albeit unsuccessfully – twice. The SPS GALICIA, positioned 75 nautical miles from the attack location, was immediately tasked to locate the skiffs involved. The coordination between the EUNAVFOR French Maritime Patrol and Reconnaissance Aircraft and EUNAVFOR's Spanish SPS GALICIA's helicopter made it possible to find and identify one skiff. The warship's helicopter successfully intercepted this skiff with the ship's boarding team. Early the following day, SPS GALICIA's helicopter saw two more suspicious skiffs and the boarding team quickly intercepted one of the two skiffs. In total, eleven suspected pirates and two skiffs were intercepted; one other skiff escaped the scene. This disruption hindered further pirate actions and prevented similar attacks on merchant and vulnerable vessels from happening again (eunavfor.eu, 2010).

4.3.2.4 To conduct 'Friendly Approach' and boarding missions

Apart from escorting, Friendly Approaches are part of the daily duties of EUNAVFOR units. 'Friendly Approaches' or boarding missions are conducted to gather intelligence. The sailors speak with the fishing communities and trading vessels in operation areas

and advise on Best Management Practices for protection against pirates in the region to the crew (eunavfor.eu, 2012a). There are two aims of the 'Friendly Approach'. One aim is to console nearby seafarers that Operation Atalanta is on observe to prevent robbery movement off the Horn of Africa. The other one is to offer an opportunity for EUNAVFOR to gain information about local vessel movements and possible pirate activity in the area (eunavfor.eu, 2012b). Taking the Spanish Ocean Patrol vessel ESPS METEORE for example, the ship's boarding team carried out over 75 'Friendly Approaches' in just three months in 2012.

4.3.2.5 To deter and disrupt piracy as well as armed robbery, and to apprehend the pirates on the high seas

A significant objective of Operation Atalanta is the deterrence and disruption of acts of piracy and armed robbery on the high seas. Warships apprehend suspected pirates following intelligence reports of pirate activity or sightings by merchant vessels and Maritime Patrol and Reconnaissance Aircrafts. For instance, on 29 November 2009, a Spanish fishing vessel was attacked by two pirate skiffs, 175 miles east of Victoria, Seychelles. The vessel's security team fired warning shots and broke the attack. Luxembourg EUNAVFOR Maritime Patrol Aircraft, operating from Seychelles, was tasked to confirm the vessel's situation and search for the pirate attack group. German EUNAVFOR warship FGS Bremen, docked in the port of Victoria, participated in searching for and in neutralising the pirates. Portuguese NATO warship NRP Alvares Cabral, which was in the same area on counter–piracy patrol, also joined the search for the pirate group. Finally, due to the effort and cooperation, the mother ship and two skiffs of pirates were caught, and ten were detained to be handed over to the Seychelles Coast Guard (eunavfor.eu, 2009). A total of 171 pirates have been transferred to competent authorities with a view to their prosecution (ibid).

4.3.2.6 To provide aid to the vessels in distress

While escorting, the EUNAVFOR warships come to the aid of vessels in distress. For instance, on 28 May 2009, the French NAVFOR warship found eight Somali sailors in

a small boat with a malfunctioning engine in the Gulf of Aden. Two were found dead, four others were injured, and two remained unhurt. While there was an unsuccessful pirate attack nearby, no evidence showed that the Somali sailors were involved in this attempted piracy incident. Subsequently, they were rescued by the French warship under the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea, obligating masters of all vessels to help those in distress. The two unhurt sailors and the two dead sailors were transferred to Boosaaso and handed over to the Puntland Coast Guard. The remaining four injured people were transferred to the French Military Hospital in Djibouti for medical treatment, and subsequently transferred to Boosaaso and handed over to a Coast Guard vessel (eunavfor.eu, 2009).

4.3.2.7 To support the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO)'s programmes to monitor fishing activity in Somali coast

To address piracy's root cause, the Operation Atalanta supports the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (UN FAO)[24] programmes to deploy 25 Fish Aggregating Devices (FAD) to attract high–value fish to the Somali shores. Besides protection, Operation Atalanta provided security and logistical support using their equipment and know–how to position these FADs (eunavfor.eu, 2020). Richard Trenchard, former FAO representative in Somalia (2015), pointed out,

> The FAD's initiative is at the heart of the work by FAO and our partners to boost coastal livelihoods, strengthen resilience and tackle the underlying causes of piracy – Illegal fishing, degradation of local fisheries, high levels of youth unemployment, and food insecurity (www.fao.org, 2015).

4.3.2.8 To perform Replenishment at Sea

The EUNAVFOR's operational area in the Horn of Africa is vast, and the distances that the warships need to cover are significant. Therefore, the ability to replenish at sea is essential, as it enables them to remain on task for extended periods, which significantly

24 "FAO is implementing a series of global programmes that are successfully supporting countries to develop and implement the policy frameworks and institutional arrangements needed to transform policy and create an enabling environment for agricultural development under climate change" (www.fao.org, 2020).

enhances their operational capability and flexibility (eunavfor.eu, 2011). For instance, over three months, the Italian Frigate ITS LIBECCIO conducted eight RAS, with several tankers operating under EUNAVFOR (FGS RHOEN, HNLMS AMSTERDAM) as well as tankers operating under other forces. Furthermore, conducting Replenishment at Sea enhanced the interoperability between the EUNAVFOR and different naval forces, which leads to the improvement of the counter–piracy operations (eunavfor.eu, 2012).

4.3.2.9 To train the maritime security forces of Somalia and the other local countries

To eradicate piracy's root cause in Somalia, the EU carried out a Regional Maritime Capacity Building plan (eunavfor.eu, 2012). It is composed of two components addressing two main objectives: to strengthen the seagoing maritime capacity of Djibouti, Kenya, Tanzania, and Seychelles and to train and equip the Coastal Police Force in the Somali regions of Puntland, Somaliland, and Galmudug; and to train and protect judges in the Somali region of Puntland (ibid).

The EUNAVFOR participates actively in the maritime capacity building process of regional navies and coast guards. Firstly, it established regional coordinated training planning which all EUNAVFOR ships need to implement when visiting ports in operation (eunavfor.eu, 2012). For example, on 11 May 2012, Spanish ship INFANTA ELENA performed training for the Djiboutian Coast Guard. The training schedule was intense: the Djiboutian Coast Guard sailors first visited the ship, particularly the operating room, then the officers of the warship presented the sensors and weapons and instructed how to implement the related measures when under pirate attack. The next training session focused on Best Management Practices and protective measures carried out by merchant vessels. In doing so, the coast guards will be able to inform the merchant vessels cruising offshore or in Djibouti, and thus participate in the fight against piracy. Furthermore, the Djibouti navy sailors were trained in an internet–based secure network used as an alert and coordination system by all the anti–piracy

stakeholders, named Mercury, which the Djiboutian Navy operational centre will subsequently inaugurate (ibid).

4.3.2.10 To enhance multi–level diplomatic ties with other naval forces

Naval forces always have a diplomatic role to play. Given that EUNAVFOR Somalia "took the lead in coordinating cooperation among all actors present in the area" (Pejsova, 2019), it frequently interacted with other naval forces at sea. Apart from traditional partners such as the forces of NATO and those of the US–led Combined Maritime Task Force, it began to enhance communication and cooperation with those countries which previously were reluctant to cooperate. For instance, the Chinese Escort Task Force, deployed in the Horn of Africa, has had 27 courtesy visits and five coordinated Exercises with EUNAVFOR between 2009 and 2019[25]. On 6 August 2018, EUNAVFOR's Operation Commander, Major General Charlie Stickland, met Senior Captain Liang Yang, Commanding Officer of the Chinese People's Liberation Army Support Base Djibouti, on board EUNAVFOR's new flagship, the ESPS CASTILLA. There they focused on how to continue and improve the ongoing counter–piracy efforts off the coast of Somalia (eunavfor.eu, 2018)[26].

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[25] Based on the communications of EUNAVFOR, calculated by the author.

[26] Eva Pejsova reported that "the EUNAVFOR Operational Commander was invited to the Chinese naval base in Djibouti on 8 August 2018" and that this was "the first and only time Western military personnel visited the Chinese overseas base", See: Pejsova, E., 2019. The EU as a Maritime Security Provider. European Union Institute for Security Studies, December 2019. However, according to the press news released by Press Centre of Operation ATLANTA, the meeting was on board EUNAVFOR's Spanish warship ESPS Castilla, see: EU NAVFOR Somalia, 2018. EUNAVFOR Discusses Counter–Piracy Tactics With Chinese Naval Forces | Eunavfor. [online] Eunavfor.eu. Available at: <https://eunavfor.eu/eu–navfor–discusses–counter–piracy–tactics–with–chinese–naval–forces/> [Accessed 1 August 2020].

4.3.3 Means to Operate

Under the strategic framework of 'end, ways and means' of the military operation, 'means' are the resources required for the execution of the 'way'. Having clarified the ends and methods of Operation Atalanta, this analysis now explores which resources the EU uses to achieve the objectives mentioned above.

4.3.3.1 Command structure of Operation Atalanta

Different from individual sovereign states, the EU had an ad hoc command structure for the military operation. The political control and strategic direction of Operation Atalanta were exercised by EU's Political and Security Committee. The European Union Military Committee – the highest military body set up within the Council – undertakes military consultation and cooperation between the EU Member States. It monitors the execution of Operation Atalanta while the European Union Military Staff provides support and conducts strategic analysis.

The Operation Commander, responsible for planning and the conduct of the Operation, oversees EUNAVFOR from the Operational Headquarters. The Deputy Operation Commander substitutes if the Operation Commander is absent. The Operation Commander and the Deputy Operation Commander rotate once a year and are senior officers with long and successful naval careers. The first Operation Commander was Rear Admiral Philip Jones from the Royal Naval Force of the United Kingdom.

The first Operational Headquarters of Operation Atalanta was located at Northwood, United Kingdom; however, on 29 March 2019, the Operational Headquarters was relocated at Rota naval base in Spain, and the Maritime Security Centre for the Horn of Africa, as part of the Operational Headquarters, transferred to Brest, France (eunavfor.eu, 2019).

The Force Commander commands and controls the Operation Area's military forces on a flagship contributed by a Member State. He is responsible for the planning, orchestration, and execution of tactical military activities at sea. The first Force Commander was Commodore Antonios Papaioannou from the Hellenic Navy of Greece.

4.3.3.2 Military assets of Operation Atalanta

The EUNAVFOR's assets deployed for Operation Atalanta are composed of five parts, including Surface Vessels, Maritime Patrol and Reconnaissance Aircrafts, Unmanned Aerial System, Rotary wing aircrafts, Autonomous Vessel Protection Detachment, with further provision for military and civilian staff to work at the Operational Headquarters or on–board units. The composition of EUNAVFOR has constantly changed due to the frequent rotation of units. In the first four–month phase of the Operation, there were up to six ships and three maritime patrol aircraft contributed by the United Kingdom, France, Greece, Spain, and Germany, and approximately 1200 people took part in the operation at any one time. However, with the decline of piracy and tactical adjustments, there was a decline in the number of warships and aircrafts at sea. Typically, this comprised approximately 600 personnel, 1–3 Surface Combat Vessels, and 1–2 MPRA.

Surface Vessels

Surface Vessels are an essential component among the assets deployed in the Horn of Africa. They play a leading role in escorting the vessels, deterring, and disrupting piracy acts, and helping the vessels in distress. The surface vessels rotate every six months. The first warships which participated in Operation Atalanta came from the United Kingdom and Germany in December 2008. They had previously been operating in the maritime area as part of Combined Task Force 150, another multinational coalition naval task force deployed across the Horn of Africa. Nine countries contributed their warships for Operation Atalanta, including the EU Member States of Belgium, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Netherlands, Spain, and Sweden. Norway was the first non–EU country to contribute to the Operation (with a newly built warship in August 2009).

Maritime Patrol and Reconnaissance Aircrafts

Maritime Patrol and Reconnaissance Aircrafts play a vital part in EUNAVFOR Somalia. They fly over the theatre of operation, detect suspicious skiffs, and guide warships to their position. They also collect intelligence for the vessels. The aircraft are equipped with several advanced surveillance systems that significantly enhance EUNAVFOR's Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance capability in the Somali Basin and the Gulf of Aden. The MPRAs of Luxembourg, Spain, France, Germany, Sweden, and Portugal have been operating together with EUNAVFOR warships. The Maritime Patrol and Reconnaissance Aircrafts usually take off from Djibouti, Mombasa (Kenya), or Port Victoria (Seychelles).

Unmanned Aerial System

Spain provided Unmanned Aerial System for Operation Atalanta. In August 2013, a Spanish Unmanned Aerial Vehicle was deployed. To become airborne, the Scan Eagle is catapulted off the deck using a "super wedge" launcher system, and it is recovered using a maritime 'skyhook' retrieval system. Scan Eagle can remain airborne for more than 18 hours operating day and night and provides images and videos of naval events in real–time. Up until March 2017, Scan Eagle had achieved 500 hours in flight.

Rotary Wing Aircrafts

As an on–board component of the warships, Rotary Wing Aircraft are an exceptionally versatile component in the Force Commander's armoury. They provide an ideal deterrence, disruption, and a surveillance capability dealing with piracy; they also offer the ability to move people and supplies quickly and effectively, often between ships, or into remote or inaccessible areas.

Autonomous Vessel Protection Detachment

The core task of Operation Atalanta is to protect WFP vessels delivering aid to Somalia. EUNAVFOR provides an escorting warship for short–term chartered vessels, while Autonomous Vessel Protection Detachments are used to protect longer–term chartered vessels and can provide 7/24 protection for WFP shipping. Furthermore, they allow greater flexibility in using the warships in the fight against piracy, while guaranteeing the security of WFP shipments.

The first Autonomous Vessel Protection Detachment deployed on–board WFP-chartered vessels came from the Netherlands in June 2012. Germany, Finland, Lithuania, Serbia, Croatia, and Montenegro deployed their crack troops to achieve this task.

4.4. Outcome of Operation Atalanta

Operation Atalanta, as the first case study in this thesis, has examined the EU's expression of sea power – as shown in the notion of sea power reiterated in Chapter Two, a sea power is supposed to possess the ability to protect the international maritime commerce and utilisation of oceanic resources, to project military power into the sea, and to influence events on land (Tangredi, 2002). Based on this triple–ability framework, this section examines the outcome of Operation Atalanta.

Operation Atalanta, as one of most successful CFDP missions (Fiott, 2020), shows the abilities of the EU's sea power in this triple–capability framework. Firstly, the EU can protect international maritime commerce and use oceanic resources. Regarding Operation Atalanta, although its key task was protecting the vessels of WFP and AMISOM, the actions of the EUNAVFOR have significantly deterred and cracked down on piracy and ensured the safety of ships passing through this critical channel, thereby protecting the international trading system. Furthermore, the vessels which benefit from the presence and protection of Operation Atalanta include merchant vessels, fishing vessels, cruise ships, and even private sailing boats. Therefore,

Operation Atalanta guarantees the regular use of the oceanic resources for the vessels off the Somalia coast.

Secondly, the EU can project military power into the ocean for sea and area control. To achieve sea control, Operation Atalanta established one Operational Headquarters on land and another one at sea. It put into use naval forces, including the surface vessels, Maritime Patrol and Reconnaissance Aircrafts, Unmanned Aerial System, Rotary wing Aircrafts, Autonomous Vessel Protection Detachment, and the provision of military and civilian staff to work at the Operational Headquarters or on–board units. With the effort of other naval forces, Operation Atalanta guarantees the maritime area's safety in the Horn of Africa.

Thirdly, the EU can influence events on land using naval force. This ability is reflected in the objectives of Operation Atalanta to address the root cause of piracy. Operation Atalanta is part and parcel of the EU integrated approach in the Horn of Africa. Apart from Operation Atalanta, the EU launched two other missions: a civilian mission, EUCAP Somalia, which was augmented with military expertise designed to support regional maritime capacity–building, and a training mission, EUTM Somalia, which aims to strengthen the Somali National Government and the institutions of Somalia by providing military training to members of the Somali National Armed Forces. Operation Atalanta's effort at sea not only paved the way for the EU's follow–up steps, but also actively involved in different tasks, making a further contribution to Somalia's security and stability. Furthermore, the EU integrated approach can be considered as part and parcel of the EU's more comprehensive security strategy towards Africa, which will be discussed in more detail in the following case studies.

4.5 Conclusion

The success of the Operation Atalanta supports the finding at the EU possesses sea power. Under the strategic framework of 'ends, ways and means", a military operation's success is just like a stable stool. Its three legs must be balanced: the objectives of the

operation are realistic, while the resources and assets of the operation are sufficient, and the methods and process of the operation are sound. This triple–condition is a prerequisite for every successful military operation. Regarding the Operation Atalanta, its objectives are feasible and holistic, well balancing the short–medium term response and long-term response (Kaunert and Zwolski, 2012); its methods and process are realistic, well matching the needs of the conflict; and its resources and assets are sufficient, due to the support and contributions made by the Member States.

However, the nature of operation Atalanta is as a counter–piracy operation, which is quite different from traditional naval warfare. Firstly, it is low–intensity naval engagement: the enemy for EUNAVFOR Somalia are the Somali pirates, who have nothing but grenades as weapons. As Till(2013) pointed out, "the strategic effectiveness of sea power depends importantly on the strengths and weaknesses of who it is exerted against" (2013, p.26). Therefore, EU sea power depends on what kind of rival it will fight. In the case of the counter–piracy fight in the Horn of Africa, EU sea power dominates.

Moreover, EUNAVFOR Somalia is not the only naval force fighting in the Horn of Africa. As mentioned above, the US and NATO forces and the naval forces from individual countries (such as Russia, China, India, Japan, and South Korea) all participated in the counter–piracy fight of this conflict zone. Therefore, the success of EUNAVFOR Somalia was established in close cooperation with other naval actors. It is questionable whether the EU would still be a sea power without these partners, especially their western partners.

Is the EU a sea power? If the answer is 'yes', then what kind of sea power is it? To answer these questions further case study research is warranted. Apart from Operation Atalanta, in 2015 the EU launched Operation Sophia, followed in 2020 by Operation

IRINI, both of which are explored in the next chapter for a deeper understanding of EU sea power.

Chapter 5 The Practice of EU Sea Power in Mediterranean Sea: Taking Operation Sophia and Operation IRINI as a Case Study

5.1 Introduction

As demonstrated in the introductory chapter, the thesis adopts a multi-case research structure. This chapter is an exposition of the second case study of the thesis. The second case study aims to answer the question whether, in the fight against human smuggling and trafficking and against the illegal arms exports to Libya in the Mediterranean Sea, the EU has the abilities that sea power needs? And if so, to what extent?

In the preceding chapter, the study of Operation Atalanta shows that in the counter-piracy fight in the Horn of Africa, the EU is a sea power in collaboration with other partners in the region. This chapter examines the EU's other two maritime military operations, Operation Sophia[27], and Operation IRINI. As they were successively launched in the Mediterranean Sea, and there is a considerable overlap in their operational objectives, they are discussed together in the same chapter.

In June 2015, the EU launched the Operation Sophia in response to the migrant crisis in the Mediterranean Sea. On 31 March 2020, Operation Sophia ended. It was followed by the Operation IRINI, aiming to "implement the UN arms embargo on Libya by using aerial, satellite and maritime assets" (Council of the EU, 2020). These twofold

[27] Sophia is the name of a baby saved by German frigate Schleswig-Holstein On 24 August 2015. Along with the Somali mother of the baby, 453 migrants saved by the EUNAVFOR MED Task Force on the same day. The EU changed the name of EUNAVFOR MED to Operation Sophia (www.operationsophia.eu, 2015).

operations are examined under the same strategic framework of 'ends, ways and means', as was done in the preceding chapter.

This chapter is organised into four sections. Section One is an introduction. Section Two covers the context and the background of the two maritime military operations. Section Three focuses on the 'end, ways and means' of the operations. And the last section concludes the chapter by evaluating the role EU sea power plays in the Mediterranean Sea.

5.2 Context and Background

Due to the rapid economic development in Western Europe at the end of the 19th century and beginning of the 20th century, Western Europe has always been a target destination attracting immigrants, including immigrant workers, ethnic immigrants, refugees and asylum seekers.

However, since the beginning of 2015, the number of refugees and economic migrants flocking to Europe has increased dramatically. According to the UN Refugee Agency statistics, 137,000 refugees and migrants reached Europe across the Mediterranean Sea in the first six months of 2015 (www.unhcr.org, 2015). Furthermore, "many more tried, but didn't make it" (ibid). On 19 April 2015, nearly 700 migrants on a boat off the Italian island of Lampedusa lost their lives due to shipwreck. Therefore, from where did the migrants crossing the waters come? Why did they want to enter EU countries? How has the EU responded? The answers to these questions form the context and background of Operation Sophia.

5.2.1 Where did the refugees and the economic migrants crossing the Mediterranean Sea come from?

As Map 5-1shows, there are three migratory routes via the Mediterranean Sea to reach Europe: the eastern Mediterranean route from Turkey to Greece across the Aegean Sea; the central Mediterranean route from Libya to Italy; and the western Mediterranean

route from Morocco or Algeria to Spain (House of Lords, 2016). The migrants risking their lives at sea come from the countries suffering from conflicts, such as Syria, Afghanistan, Iraq and Somalia (www.unhcr.org, 2015). And some of the migrants come from sub-Saharan Africa (ibid).

Map 4: Migratory routes via the Mediterranean Sea to reach Europe
(Souces: Frontex, 2015)

5.2.2 Why did they come to the EU countries?

The root cause of the European migrant crisis is complicated. First of all, migration has been considered a "mega-trend of this century" [28](Swing, www.devex.com, 2016). The European migrant crisis is just a microcosm of the international trend.

Secondly, the increase in the migrant problem in Europe is the direct result of the instability of Syria and the deteriorating security situation in the Middle East. Four million Syrians fled abroad due to the Syrian civil war (BBC, 2015). Another example is Libya. Because of the continuous conflicts between the various internal powers and poor management of border control, Libya became not only a source of refugees flooding to Europe but the main transit channel for refugees in surrounding African countries. In June 2015, nearly half a million people gathered at Libyan beaches and tried to cross the sea to reach Europe (Hughes, 2015).

[28] See https://environmentalmigration.iom.int/policy/human-mobility-cop21

Thirdly, economic factors are an essential inducement for the trans-regional migration of refugees in West Asia and Africa. The economy of Africa has been lagging for a long time. Most countries in West Asia and North Africa rely heavily on oil resources, and the sharp drop in international oil prices leads to the decline of the national economy. Improving living conditions became an important driving force for people to move abroad.

Fourthly, Europe is the ideal destination for the people in the countries mentioned above. The European countries are not only close to them, but also have developed economies, good social benefits, and a 'welcome culture' in certain EU Member States (Liebe et al. 2018). Therefore, all the factors intertwined and led to a spike in the European refugee crisis.

5.2.3 How has the EU responded?

The European migrant crisis was, first of all, a humanitarian crisis. On 3 October 2013, 360 refugees and other migrants lost their lives due to a shipwreck off the southern Italian island of Lampedusa. (BBC, 2013). The Italian government responded and launched a Search and Rescue (SAR) operation in the Sicily Channel, entitled "Mare Nostrum" (which meant 'our sea' in Latin) in the autumn of 2013 (Taylor, 2015). With a budget of US$12 million per month, Italian operation Mare Nostrum saved more than 130,000 lives (ibid). However, the Italian government failed to get more support for Mare Nostrum from other EU Member States and it lasted only one year due to financial and political unsustainability (Biava, 2020).

As Italy has moved the migration issue to the EU level, the EU replaced it with Operation Triton, led by the EU Border Agency – European Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders of the Member States of the EU (Frontex. There were two differences between Triton and Mare Nostrum: Triton vessels patrolled just off the Libyan coast, which meant its primary objective focused more on the border control than research and rescue; and Triton had a limited

budget (US$ 3.6 million monthly), which was less than one-third of that of Mare Nostrum. Therefore, the study (Briva, 2020) showed that "Triton was less ambitious in terms of means and mandate compared to Mare Nostrum" (p.84).

Unfortunately, on 19 April 2015, tragedy took place again ---- more than 700 people lost their lives by drowning near the island of Lampedusa of Italy (BBC, 2015). This event forced the EU to pay more attention to the migrant crisis. On 23 April, the European Council convened an extraordinary meeting to tackle the challenge at the EU level and finally committed "to strengthen … presence at sea, to fight the traffickers, to prevent illegal migration flows and to reinforce internal solidarity and responsibility" (Council of the EU, 2015b). To fulfil the points of commitment, the EU decided to take active steps, including "to immediately begin preparations for a possible Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) operation to this effect" (ibid). On 22 June 2015, the EU launched EU NAVFOR Med[29], the first CSDP anti-migrant smuggling maritime operation in the Mediterranean Sea.

5.2.4 From SOPHIA to IRINI: EU's Continuous Presence in Mediterranean Sea

From 2015 to 2020, the EU, which was seriously impacted by the migration crisis, has taken a comprehensive approach to migration. On the one hand, the EU strengthened border control, raised the threshold for receiving refugees, and sped up the screening and refugee repatriation procedures. On the other hand, the EU reached a relief agreement with Turkey and increased investment in Africa to seek local solutions. With the waning of the European refugee crisis, Operation Sophia, as part and parcel of the EU's comprehensive approach, came to an end on 31 March 2020.

However, the root cause of the refugee crisis still exists. The situation of Libya remains challenging, as reiterated in the *Berlin Conference Conclusions*

[29] Henceforth Operation Sophia.

> The conflict in Libya, the instability in the country, the external interferences, the institutional divisions, the proliferation of a vast amount of unchecked weapons and the economy of predation continue to be a threat to international peace and security by providing fertile grounds for traffickers, armed groups and terrorist organizations (UNSMIL, 2020).

Against this background, the Council decided to launch another CSDP mission, Operation IRINI (Greek for 'peace') in the Mediterranean Sea. The core task of the mission is the "implementation of the UN arms embargo through the use of aerial, satellite and maritime assets" (Council of the EU, 2020).

In reality, the operation IRINI can be considered as the continuous military presence of the EU in the Mediterranean Sea, where is a strategically complex maritime area. The EU, as well as the Member States, have great geostrategic and economic interests there. From a geopolitical perspective, the Mediterranean Sea serves as a bridge connecting the rich European countries in the north to the poor African countries in the south. The vast differences in economic performance led to the migration flow. Economically, the Mediterranean Sea carries around 30% of all global seaborne trade in volume, and 25% of worldwide seaborne oil traffic (Till, 2013). Moreover, the southern Mediterranean countries are rich in natural gas and oil, which accounts for a large proportion of the energy products imported by the EU. Due to the strategic relevance of the Mediterranean Sea, sea control matters to the EU. Therefore, after the operation Sophia, the EU decided to continue the maritime military presence in the Mediterranean Sea. However, Operation IRINI was questioned due to its maritime emphasis in the implementation of the UN arms embargo in Libya. Obviously, the channels on land are also used extensively to supply arms to the parties involved in the conflict[30].

Operation IRINI focuses on the implementation of the Arms Embargo in Libya, which is of great strategic relevance to the EU. From a geostrategic perspective, as an EU

[30] See "Operation IRINI: Remarks by High Representative/Vice-President Josef Borrell following the launch of the operation". [Online] <http://

neighbouring country separated by the sea, Libya plays a crucial role in the maritime security of the Mediterranean Sea. It has been not only the main source of migration flow to Europe, but also the transit place of a large number of African migrants of neighbouring countries, which exploited the loophole of the poorly managed border control. As the Second Report of the Commission (2017) argued, "the existence of a unified government in Libya, able to provide security across the country and work with the EU on migration, is a precondition for meaningful action against people smuggling networks onshore" (House of Lords, 2017). Furthermore, "Libya has the largest proven reserves of oil in Africa" (Hope, 2019, p.1). In 2018, 28% of EU oil imports came from Russia, 11% from Norway and 6.7% from Libya (ibid).

Libya has a special historical association with European countries, especially France. After the outbreak of World War II, southern Libya was controlled by France. Italy occupied northern Libya after the Italian Turkish war in 1912. France and Italy did not withdraw from the territory of Libya until the declaration of the country's independence in 1951. In 2011, a Britain and France-initiated and NATO-led military intervention ended the four decades' rule of Qadhafi in Libya. Therefore, Britain and France have a voice in every relevant issue on Libya among the EU Member States. Under the active promotion of France, Germany and other countries, the EU decided to launch a maritime military operation against the export of arms towards Libya in the Mediterranean Sea.

5.3 'Ends, Ways and Means' of Operation Sophia and Operation IRINI

As was done in the preceding chapter, Operation Sophia and IRINI are examined under this framework 'end, ways and means'. The following questions are examined: What were the aims of this Operation? How did it operate? What resources and assets were employed?

5.3.1 Ends of Operation Sophia

The objectives of Operation Sophia first articulated in *Council Decision (CFSP) 2015/778 of 18 May 2015 on a European Union military operation in the Southern Central Mediterranean (EUNAVFOR MED)* (Council of the EU, 2015c) were "to contribute to the disruption of the business model of human smuggling and trafficking networks in the Southern Central Mediterranean (EUNAVFOR Med)" (ibid, p.3). On 20 June 2016, the Council launched *COUNCIL DECISION (CFSP) 2016/993 amending Decision (CFSP) 2015/778 on a European Union military operation in the Southern Central Mediterranean (EUNAVFOR MED operation Sophia)* (Council of the EU, 2016), which added two supporting tasks, including:

> capacity building and training of, and information sharing with, the Libyan Coastguard and Navy, based on a request by the legitimate Libyan authorities taking into account the need for Libyan ownership; and contributing to information sharing, as well as implementation of the UN arms embargo on the high seas off the coast of Libya on the basis of a new UN Security Council Resolution. (Council of the EU, 2016).

Main Objective: To contribute to the disruption of the business model of human smuggling and trafficking networks in the Southern Central Mediterranean

As Tardy (2015) argued, "the operation focuses on smugglers rather than on the rescue of the migrants themselves, even though actions to prevent further loss of life at sea are a visible part of the mandate" (p.1). In reality, smuggling from West Asia and Africa to Europe has gradually developed into a mature 'industry'. Human traffickers and smuggling organisations have been very skilled in transporting refugees to Europe, which vigorously promotes the wave of refugee smuggling. As the root causes of Europe's maritime refugee crisis are the conflicts and poverty in the related countries, which cannot be solved in the short term, to disrupt the human smuggling and trafficking networks seems like a possible goal to stop the flow of refugees and migrants. Therefore, this objective can be considered a direct and short-medium term goal of the Operation Sophia.

Supporting Objective One: To build and train the Libyan Coastguard and Navy capacity, and to share information with them

Supporting Objective Two: To contribute information sharing and implementation of the UN arms embargo on the high seas off the coast of Libya

As mentioned in the preceding paragraph, the main objective of the Operation Sophia is a short-medium term response to the European maritime refugee crisis. However, the EU also needs to establish some long-term goals to address the root cause of the crisis. As part of the EU comprehensive approach, cooperation with the legitimate local government of the region and the local naval force plays a key role in resolving the crisis. Additionally, the EU sought to address one of the root causes of the refugee crisis - the situation in Libya. Given that Libya is not only the source of refugees but also the transit channel for them, it is of great significance to end the civil war and to maintain effective governance in this deeply divided country. Therefore, the EU determined the implementation of the UN arms embargo.

Regarding EU sea power, as was done in the preceding chapter, sea power theory can be used as an explanatory factor to understand the objectives of Operation Sophia and Operation IRINI. According to the modern understanding of sea power, as emphasised repeatedly in the thesis, sea power can be defined as

> the combination of a nation-state's capacity for international maritime commerce and utilisation of the oceanic resource, with its ability to project military power into the sea, for the purposes of sea and area control, and from the sea, in order to influence events on land by means of naval forces" (Tangredi, 2002, p. 3-4).

It is clear that the objectives of the operation Sophia covered mostly the last two aspects of the output of sea power: projecting military power into the sea for sea control and influencing the events on land using naval forces. No matter the rescue of the vessels in distress, or disruption of the human smuggling and trafficking, they focus essentially on controlling the operational maritime area. And the objective of the capacity building and training of the Libyan Coast Guard and Navy and the implementation of the UN

arms embargo contribute to addressing the root cause of the crisis, in other words, to influence the events on land.

5.3.1.1 Ends of Operation IRINI

After the end of Operation Sophia in March 2020, the EU launched the Operation IRINI in May. The objectives of Operation IRINI are elaborated in *Council Decision (CFSP) 2020/472 of 31 March 2020 on a European Union military operation in the Mediterranean (EUNAVFOR MED IRINI)* (Council of the EU, 2020). There is one core objective and two secondary objectives for operation IRINI based on *UN Resolution 1970 (2011)* and follow-up resolutions[31].

Core Objective: To Implement UN Arms Embargo on Libya with Aerial, Satellite and Maritime Assets

In 2011, the UN Security Council adopted *Resolution 1970 (2011)*, which decided to introduce the arms embargo, travel ban, asset freeze, and designation criteria in Libya. In terms of the arms embargo, the *Resolution 1970 (2011)* reiterated, as

> All Member States are required to prevent the sale or supply to Libya of arms and related material of all types, including weapons and ammunition, military vehicles and equipment, paramilitary equipment, and spare parts for the aforementioned (with an exception for the Libyan government for non-lethal material, technical assistance, training or financial assistance); prohibits the export by Libya, and procurement by Member States, of all arms and related material (UN Security Council, 2011).

After the fall of Quadafi's regime, as argued, "(the) interim authorities proved unable to form a stable government, address security issues, reshape the country's finances, or create a viable framework for post-Eastern Affairs post-conflict justice and reconciliation" (Blanchard, 2020 p.3). Libya became a divided country with two main

[31] With respect to the situation in Libya, the UN Security Council has adopted 38 resolutions since 2011.

institutions. One side is the Government of National Accord in Tripoli, with its supporters, who retain control of the capital and other key western areas. It is the legitimate government. The other side is a rival interim government in eastern Libya, supported by the Libyan National Army/Libyan Arab Armed Forces movement. They and their local partners manipulate the key oil production and export infrastructure (ibid). Additionally, there are the foreign actors, who stand behind the fragmented institutions in Libya. Several countries, such as Egypt, the United Arab Emirates, Russia and Turkey, export arms into Libya contrary to the *UN Arms Embargo Resolution*. Therefore, the implementation of the UN Arms Embargo addresses the root cause of the civil war in Libya.

Secondary objective One: To conduct monitoring and surveillance activities and gather information on illicit exports from Libya of petroleum

The decision of the EU to charge operation IRINI this task was based on the *UN Resolution 1970 (2011)* and sequential Resolutions on Libya. *UN Resolution 2146 (2014)* required the Member States to

> Inspect vessels designated by the UN that might be carrying illicit crude oil; To ensure the return to Libya of any illicit crude oil thereby discovered and to prevent any designated vessel carrying illicit crude from calling at any of their ports (UN Security Council, 2014).

In the Berlin Conference on Libya, the participants also reached a consensus that the "National Oil Corporation is Libya's sole independent and legitimate oil company" (unsmil.unmissions.org, 2020) and objected to

> Any attempt at damaging Libya's oil infrastructure, any illicit exploitation of its energy resources, which belong to the Libyan people, through the sale or purchase of Libyan crude oil and derivatives outside the NOC's control and call for the transparent and equitable distribution of oil revenues" (unsmil.unmissions.org, 2020).

Secondary Objective Two: To assist in the development of the capacities and in the training of the Libyan Coast Guard and Navy in law enforcement tasks at sea, in particular to prevent human smuggling and trafficking

The objective of capacity-building and training of Libyan Coast Guard and Navy has been the objective of Operation Sophia. It implies that the EU seeks to maintain continuity of the support and military aid to the legitimate government of Libya.

5.3.2 Ways to Operate

As argued in the preceding section, the ends of Operation Sophia is "to contribute to the disruption of the business model of human smuggling and trafficking networks in the Southern Central Mediterranean" (Council of EU, 2015c), adding twofold support objectives: the capacity building and training of, and information sharing with, the Libyan Coastguard and Navy, and contributing to information sharing, as well as the implementation of the UN arms embargo on the high seas off the coast of Libya (Council of EU, 2016c).

Unlike the EU first maritime military operation – operation Atalanta - Operation Sophia was planned and conducted in sequential phases. The main task of the first phase was to detect and monitor the migration networks through information gathering, and to patrol on the high seas. The second phase aimed to board, search, seize and diversify the suspected vessels, and the third phase focused on disposing of the crime vessels or rendering them inoperable (Council of the EU, 2016c).

On 27 June 2015, one of the Operation units, the Italian Navy Ship ITS Cavour, which departed the harbour of Taranto for the south part of the central Mediterranean Sea, started the first phase of the Operation EUNAVFOR Med. On 7 October 2015, the mission entered the second phase, which implied that the EUNAVFOR could board,

search, seize and divert the suspected vessels on the high seas in accordance with the international law.

5.3.2.1 To patrol on the high sea

In the first phase of the Operation Sophia, the ways to operate focused on patrolling and aimed at information gathering and detection. For instance, on 3 July 2015, a maritime surveillance aircraft Falcon 50 of the French Navy flew over the central Mediterranean for the first operational contribution of France to Operation Sophia. Taking off from the French naval air base Lann Bihoué, it flew three hours off Sicily, thanks to the fuel refill at Sigonella in Italy. It collected information and transferred this to the Force headquarters of the operation on board ITS Cavour (www.operationsophia.eu, 2015a).

While patrolling on the high seas, the vessels rescued the ships in distress, as well as the on-board migrants. Take the rescue mission of the German Frigate SCHLESWIG-HOLSTEIN as an example. On July 22, following the request from the Italian Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre, the German Frigate SCHLESWIG-HOLSTEIN, while patrolling the operational area, recovered a boat in distress and rescued a total number of 249 migrants (www.operationsophia.eu, 2015b).

5.3.2.2 To cooperate with partner agencies

Intelligence played an essential role in the fight against human smuggling and trafficking. The EU enhanced the synergy and cooperation among the EU institutions to facilitate the collection and transmission of information. EUNAVFOR Med closely cooperated with other EU institutions and partner countries to enhance intelligence collecting and sharing by establishing two cross-sectional institutions - the Joint Operational Team in Europol and the Crime Information Cell on-board.

In March 2015, the EU established an intelligence-led Joint Operational Team Mare, which was based on the cooperation and synergy of Europol, the EU Member States,

the United States, Frontex and International Criminal Police Organization. Due to Europol's unique intelligence resources, Joint Operational Team Mare "identifies concrete investigative leads, supports its partners in initiating new investigations and provides criminal analysis" (www.operationsophia.eu, 2015d). Between March and December in 2015, it had initiated over 165 new cases' data, inserted the data of over 3000 facilitators into a dedicated database, and identified more than 100 suspected vessels (ibid).

Due to the increase of the migratory flow and the involvement of organised crime on a large scale, the EU decided in December 2015 to convert the Joint Operational Team Mare into the European Migrant Smuggling Centre, which can offer on-the-spot support and strengthened analytical capabilities.

On 5 July 2018, following the *EU Council decision* (Council of the EU, 2018b), the EU established the Crime Information Cell, which was composed of five specialised experts from EU agencies - Europol, Frontex, the European Border and Coast Guard Agency, and Operation Sophia. It has been on board the flagship of Operation Sophia, Italian Navy Ship San Giusto, moored in Augusta. Functionally, the Crime Information Cell connected the EU Common Security and Defence Policy with EU Justice and Home Affairs, strengthening the EU's ability to attack human smuggling and trafficking in the Mediterranean Sea.

During the second phase of the operation, conducting rescues was still important. For instance, on 27 May 2016, while on patrol, the Luxemburgish aircraft SW3 Merlin III spotted a sinking wooden vessel with approximately 100 people on board. The Italian Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre, having received this information, requested Operation Sophia's Force Headquarters to act. The Spanish Frigate REINA SOFIA headed to the sinking boat. Simultaneously, the Spanish air force aircraft VIGMA D-4 took off from Sigonella airbase, reached the wooden vessel, and dropped off life

jackets and lifeboats. As a result, the Spanish Frigate saved 206 migrants, of whom 77 were from the sinking vessel and 129 from another rubber boat (www.operationsophia.eu, 2016a). Meanwhile, the Frontex-led operation TRITON and Italian Coast Guard saved 500 more migrants, who were transferred to Reina SOFIA (ibid). There were a total of 706 migrants on board the Spanish REINA SOFIA which headed to the harbour of Taranto (ibid).

5.3.2.3 To train the Libyan Coast Guard and Navy

In June 2016, the Council of the EU added the training of the Libyan Coast Guard and Navy as the support mission of the Operation Sophia. For instance, on 23 August 2016, the EUNAVFOR Med Operation Commander and the Commander of Libyan Coastguard and Port Security signed an agreement for training "at sea, ashore (in EU Member States training facilities, or in Libya) and on board Libyan Coast Guard and Navy Patrol Boats" (www.operationsophia.eu, 2016b). The operation successfully trained about 500 Libyan officers and sailors (www.operationirini.eu, 2020).

5.2.3.4 To Conduct "Friendly Approach" at Sea

As was done in the Operation Atalanta, a "friendly approach" was conducted during the Operation Sophia and Operation IRINI to collect information about suspicious vessels and smugglers. For example, in January 2017, the French light Frigate Commandant DUCUING conducted four "friendly approach" operations in one week. The crew conducted the investigation on a fishing boat and two sailing boats off the Libyan coast, and on board a bulk-carrier (www. www.operationsophia.eu, 2017). They sought to organise a network with seafarers appearing in the area, which was extremely helpful for the information gathering. During the first four months, the crew of operation IRINI conducted nine "friendly approach" operations (www.operationirini.eu, 2017).

5.2.3.5 To Provide Medical Aid on High Seas

For instance, on 23 May 2018, once having received the request for medical support from a Tunisian fishing boat, the German Auxiliary ship MOSEL sent a doctor, interpreter and the boarding team to the fishing vessel and provide the medical aid (www.operationsophia.eu, 2018).

5.2.3.6 To Implement UN Arms Embargo by detecting and boarding the suspected vessel

To implement the UN arms embargo in Libya was the support task of Operation Sophia. On 19 June 2017, a warship of the Italy-led Operation MARE SICURO[32] detected a vessel suspected of smuggling arms to Libya. Due to the close cooperation between the different security actors in the Mediterranean Sea, the French Frigate Commandant BLAISON of Operation Sophia boarded the suspected vessel, transferred the light weapons and ammunition on board the French ship. The arms were to be disposed of in due course in accordance with the *UN Security Council Resolution 2357(2017)* (www.operationsophia.eu, 2017).

Up untill July 2018, according to the statistics from the Operation Press Centre, "concerning the arms embargo, Operation Sophia has carried out 1723 hailings, 105 friendly approaches (31 of them during 2018), 7 Flag enquiries and 3 inspections"(www.operationsophia.eu, 2018).

For the operation IRINI, implementing the arms embargo is their core task in the Mediterranean Sea. Since the launch of the operation, while patrolling the central Mediterranean Sea, Operation IRINI conducted more than 600 hailings and 9 friendly approaches during the first four months (www.operationirini.eu, 2020). With respect to monitoring, it monitored "suspect vessels at sea in more than 10 ports and landing points", and "25 airports and landing strips and more than 80 military flights or

32 Operation MARE SICURO was launched by Italian navy in late March 2015. It aimed to monitor the Libyan coast, and protect Italian vessels and oil rigs from terrorist attacks.

possible military-related air cargos going back and forth to Libya" (www.operationirini.eu, 2020). Moreover, Operation IRINI provided 14 special reports to the United Nations Panel of Experts "concerning both sides of the conflict in Libya" (ibid), underlining the impartiality of the EU.

5.3.3 Means to Operate

As with Operation Atalanta, Operation Sophia involved contributions from Member States. All EU Member States (other than Denmark), and around 1100 military and civil personnel were involved.

5.3.3.1 Command Structure of Operation Sophia

On 22 June 2015, the Council of the EU launched the naval operation against human smugglers and traffickers in the Mediterranean Sea. The Council planned the operation in sequential phases and determined the dates of each phase. The Operation Headquarters of Operation Sophia was in Rome. Rear Admiral Enrico Credendino had been appointed Operation Commander and was assisted at sea by Force Commander Rear Admiral Andrea Gueglio.

5.3.3.2 Military Assets of Operation Sophia

The military assets deployed for Operation Sophia were composed of surface vessels and air assets, as well as the provision of military and civilian staff to work at the Operational Headquarters or on-board units. The composition of Operation Sophia constantly changed due to the frequent rotation of units. However, Operation Sophia did not deploy surface vessels into the operation from January 2019 for political reasons.

Surface Vessels

Surface vessels played a key role in the fight against human smugglers and traffickers, as well as in the search and rescue mission. Once Operation Sophia launched in 2015, the Italian Navy ship ITS CAVOUR was the first flagship contributed by the Italian

Navy. It was equipped with a sophisticated Command and Control system, which designed for joint and international operations and its Command Centre hosted more than 600 personnel (www.operationsophia.eu, 2015). Germany contributed one Frigate SCHLESWIG-HOLSTEIN and one supply-ship WERRA for the launch of operation. The Frigate SCHLESWIG-HOLSTEIN was equipped with modern technological communication systems, fit for a broad range of maritime operations. The supply-ship WERRA was charged with logistic support in terms of fuel, food and water. Belgium, France, Slovenia, Spain and the UK also sent surface vessels.

Air Assets

Air assets played a crucial role in Operation Sophia. There were two categories of air assets deployed: Maritime Patrol and Reconnaissance Aircrafts and shipborne helicopters.

As in Operation Atalanta, maritime patrol and reconnaissance aircrafts, with their ability to build up maritime awareness in the vast Mediterranean Sea, made a great contribution in Operation Sophia. The maritime patrol and reconnaissance aircrafts deployed in the Operation includes Falcon 50 of the French Navy, VIGMA D-4 of the Spanish Navy, SW3 MERLIN III of Luxembourg Air Force, P-72A and Predator of Italian Navy, as well as An - 28B1R BRYZA of the Polish Navy.

In terms of shipborne helicopters, they were capable of operating maritime patrol and interdiction, troop ferrying, casualty evacuation, medium lift under-slung loads, search and rescue and other contingency tasks.

5.3.3.3 Command Structure of Operation IRINI

Operation IRINI was launched following a decision by the Council of the European Union. “EUNAVFOR MED IRINI shall report to the PSC on all issues and events related to such inspections. The PSC may consider any subsequent measures, as appropriate” (Council of the EU, 2020). The headquarters is located in Rome at the

Centocelle Joint Operations Centre. It comprises 150 staff from 20 EU Member States (Toremans, 2020). The Force Commander will be alternatively assigned to Italy and Greece every six months. The rotation of the Force Commander will take place together with the rotation of the flagship. Admiral Fabio Agostini was appointed the Commander of the Operation IRINI. The first Force Commander is Rear Admiral Ettore Socci of the Italian Navy. Operation IRINI also established a Forward Logistic Base in Augusta and Forward Logistic Site in Sigonella.

5.3.3.4 Military Assets of Operation IRINI

As the core task of Operation IRINI requires, it contributes to the implementation of the UN arms embargo by using aerial, satellite and maritime assets. 7 EU Member States (Italy, Greece, France, Germany, Poland, Malta and Luxembourg) have committed to deploying military assets to the operation, and a further 20 have provided military staff to the Headquarters.

Aerial Assets

Aerial assets have demonstrated the value in operation Atalanta and operation Sophia. The first aerial assets deployed in operation IRINI were contributed by Luxembourg, Poland and Germany. Italy will provide an Unmanned Aerial Vehicle.

Maritime Assets

Maritime assets deployed in operation IRINI will be contributed by France, Greece, Italy and Germany. The first maritime assets deployed in the Mediterranean Sea were the French Frigate ACONIT and another French anti-aircraft Frigate JEAN BART, which has the potential to monitor both the sea lines of communication and the air traffic flow (www.operationirini.eu, 2020). On 2 May 2020, the Hellenic Navy Frigate HYDRA set sail to join the Operation equipped with a helicopter and a Visit, Board, Search, and Seizure team. On 4 June 2020, the Hellenic Navy Frigate SPETSAI took part in the operation. It had on board “a boarding team specially trained to conduct Maritime Interdiction Operations as well as a Sikorsky S-70B Aegean Hawk helicopter”

(www.navalnews.com, 2020a). On 4 August 2020, the German Navy Frigate HAMBUR became involved in the operation and was expected to patrol in the Mediterranean Sea for almost five months. With two helicopters and a VBSS team on-board, it is designed as a multi-purpose vessel for escort, protection and maritime control. It is equipped with SMART-L radar, which can detect more than 1,000 targets at the same time (www.navalnews.com, 2020b). Furthermore, Italy has promised to provide a submarine.

Satellite Assets

The Council of the EU acknowledged for the first time "using satellite assets" in the mandate of a maritime operation. However, The European Satellite Centre has worked for Operation Sophia for many years (www.satcen.europa.eu, 2020).

The European Satellite Centre was established in 1992, in the vicinity of Madrid, Spain. With respect to the role that it can play in the operation IRINI, the Operation Commander of operation IRINI stated:

> The EU Satellite Centre is an essential element of Operation IRINI as it provides us with the necessary satellite imagery and analysis. … Moreover, the resources made available by SatCen are essential for the impartiality of the Operation since they facilitate the monitoring of aerial and land routes in the wider context of the arms embargo (www.satcen.europa.eu, 2020).

5.4 Conclusions

Following Operation Atalanta, Operation Sophia and Operation IRINI provided another opportunity to observe the EU through the practice of sea power.

Unlike Operation Atalanta, which was regarded as one of the most successful CSDP missions (Fiott, 2020), the decision to launch operation Sophia and operation IRINI, as well as the outcome of the operations, caused controversy. As the 'output' of EU sea power, these two maritime military operations need to be examined under the triple-capability framework of sea power. As the definition of sea power indicates,

> modern sea power can be defined as the combination of a nation-state's capacity for international maritime commerce and utilization of oceanic resources, with its ability to project military power into the sea, for the purposes of sea and area control over commerce and conflict, and from the sea, in order to influence events on land by means of naval forces (Tangredi, 2002, p.3).

Regarding Operation Sophia, as the Council outlined, the objective of launching the operation was to disrupt the business model of human smugglers and trafficking networks in the Mediterranean Sea. First of all, the military presence of the EU in the Mediterranean Sea had a positive role in sustaining the security of international shipping. Additionally, the EU uses military assets, including surface vessels, aircrafts and satellites assets, to complete a number of tasks, such as Search and Rescue missions, Visit, Board, Search, and Seizure missions, as well as the capacity-building and training missions. Obviously, by launching Operation Sophia, the EU has proved that it has the capacity to project military power into the sea for the purpose of sea control. However, whether the EU has influenced the events on land by the use of sea power remains questionable. On the one hand, as far as the crime itself was concerned, the human smugglers and traffickers plan and organise the crime onshore instead of at sea; on the other hand, the root cause of the migration crisis came from the deteriorating economy and poor governance of the countries across Sub-Saharan Africa. Therefore, from the perspective of sea power, the practice of EU sea power in the operation Sophia cannot be seen as a successful one (House of Lords, 2017), as it lacked the most important ability as a sea power, the ability to influence the events on land.

Regarding Operation IRINI, it can be considered as the continuity of Operation Sophia. These two operations cover the same operational area. Operation IRINI aims to bridge the gap left by Operation Sophia, addressing the root cause of the European immigration crisis. Furthermore, the surface vessels, which quit Operation Sophia in the last year, returned to the Mediterranean Sea. Thus, the maritime assets, aerial assets and satellite assets of the EU form a complete naval force system and can cover the operation area at sea, from the sky and in space.

Like Operation Atalanta, NATO naval forces were also deployed in the Mediterranean Sea. There are three tasks mandated to Operation Sea Guardian of NATO: maritime security capacity building, and support to maritime situational awareness and to maritime counter-terrorism. As a matter of fact, NATO's and EU's naval forces share the same tasks and cooperates in the Mediterranean Sea.

This case study highlights that the two maritime military operations of the EU in the Mediterranean Sea demonstrate the dual features of EU sea power. On the one hand, EU sea power matters in that sea area; on the other hand, EU sea power is restrained by some conditions, such as a feasible operational objective for the purpose of influencing the events on land, as well as cooperation from Western partners.

Based on the two case studies of three CSDP maritime military operations led by the EU, the thesis reaches the conclusion that the EU is a sea power due to the two dimensions, the 'input' and 'output' of sea power. EU sea power comprises the economic, political, institutional and military components as the 'input' of sea power, as the means to be capable of maintaining international maritime shipping, and to realise the sea control by using naval means and to influence events on land as the "output" of sea power.

However, another question arises: is the CSDP maritime military operation the only way for the EU to 'output' sea power? Are there other forms of the output of the EU sea power besides CSDP missions? Consequently, the next chapter will take the EU comprehensive approach to maritime security in the Gulf of Guinea as a case study, and aim to explore the different ways through which the EU deploys sea power in the maritime security domain.

Chapter 6 The Practice of EU Sea Power in the Gulf of Guinea: EU CMR Programming in the Gulf of Guinea as a Case Study

6.1 Introduction

The preceding chapters take the EU's three CSDP maritime military operations- Operation Atalanta, operation Sophia, and operation IRINI as case studies to explore the 'output' of EU sea power. By examining in a detail the 'end, ways and means' of the EU's three CSDP maritime military operations, the thesis concludes that EU sea power has to some extent developed the capabilities that a sea power should possess.

However, CSDP maritime military operations are not the only way for the EU to 'output' sea power. As is implied by the term, sea power does not equal just naval power. There are other resources and tools the EU can use. The political ambition to become a global maritime security provider gives the EU an impulse to be involved in the peripheral and international maritime security. The EU's superior economic strength allows it to have sufficient financial guarantees while participating in regional maritime security cooperation. And the EU's comprehensive cross-sectoral maritime administrative institutions enrich its choice of the tool when it cooperates with other maritime security actors. In addition, after years of maritime military presence in the Horn of Africa and the Mediterranean Sea, the EU has considerable expertise in dealing with piracy, illegal trafficking, and various forms of maritime crime. All these resources and advantages constitute the prerequisite and foundation for the 'output' of the EU sea power.

Therefore, besides the CSDP missions, there are several different forms of the 'output' of EU sea power. Taking the EU comprehensive approach to maintaining maritime security in the Gulf of Guinea as a case study, this chapter aims to explore the different

ways through which the EU uses sea power to achieve its goals in the maritime security sphere.

Among all the other regions for the EU, Africa is unique. “Africa is Europe’s closest neighbour. The ties that bind Africa and the EU are broad and deep as a result of history, proximity and shared interests” (European Commission, 2020a, p.1). Additionally, “the vast majority of Africa’s economies depend on maritime links for survival” (Styan, 2016), as the African continent straddles the Atlantic Ocean and the Indian Ocean. According to Styan (2016), “European discourse on inter-regional maritime issues tends not be about maritime links with or between African states, but rather focuses primarily on trade routes around Africa” (p. 113).

The maritime area in the Gulf of Guinea is economically relevant to the coastal and landlocked African countries and to the rest of world. From 2012, due to the efforts of the EU and other maritime security actors in the Horn of Africa, piracy off the coast of Somali has dramatically decreased. In the meantime, “in 2012, the Gulf of Guinea surpassed that of the Gulf of Aden …as the region with the highest number of reported piracy attacks in the world” (Osinowo, 2015, p.1). Consequently, this issue gained attention internationally. The UN adopted *Resolution 2018(2011) and 2039 (2012)*, which

> Emphasised the importance of supporting partner countries and regional organisations, through providing training, advice, equipment and resources where appropriate, so that they can increasingly prevent or manage crises by themselves (Council of the EU, 2014).

The EU, who has common interests with the countries of the region, took the issue seriously. The European Commission (2013) argued, “The waters surrounding the African continent, including the Gulf of Guinea, must receive increased attention and an internationally coordinated approach” (p.6). Thanks to the experience shaped by the previous practice of sea power, the EU adopts a comprehensive approach to tackle maritime security in the Gulf of Guinea. It means that besides CSDP maritime military

operations, the EU has other choices to deploy sea power in the waters of interest. Therefore, this chapter aims to explore the EU's response to a maritime crisis through the lens of sea power 'output'. As sea power can be seen as

> The combination of a nation-state's capacity for international maritime commerce and utilisation of oceanic resources, with its ability to project military power into the sea, for the purposes of sea and area control over commerce and conflict, and from the sea, in order to influence events on land by means of naval forces" (Tangredi, 2002, p.3),

the EU's comprehensive approach needs to address the Gulf of Guinea issue in three ways, including to increase maritime security and safety of critical maritime routes in the Gulf of Guinea, to enhance the military presence of the EU in this maritime area, and to address the root causes of piracy and other maritime threats in the region.

In this chapter, the research framework is based on the EU's common working process in the maritime security sphere. This framework begins by identifying the EU's interests in the maritime dimension. Then it describes the maritime threats to the EU in detail. Finally, it focuses on formulating the response to the threats (Council of the EU, 2014). This framework is adopted by the case study in this chapter on the practice of the EU sea power in the Gulf of Guinea. It includes five sections. After this introductory section, the second section provides an overview of the shared interests of the EU in the Gulf of Guinea, especially the interests of the EU in the maritime dimension. Section Three explores the maritime threats that the EU faces in the Gulf of Guinea, as well as the difference between the two piracy phenomena on both sides of the African continent. The fourth section focuses on the EU's comprehensive approach to the risks and threats. The last section concludes by pointing out that the EU's comprehensive approach against the threats at sea in the Gulf of Guinea can be seen as an effective practice of EU sea power.

6.2 EU's Interests in the Gulf of Guinea in the Maritime Dimension

As part of the Atlantic Ocean southwest of Africa, the Gulf of Guinea is geographicalally a vast maritime area in the West of the Africa Continent. Besides the

6000 kilometres of coastline, it covers 20 sovereign coastal states and islands, and even several landlocked states[33]. This geographicalal reality of the Gulf of Guinea illustrates two interconnected facts: on the one hand, every major issue there may have a maritime dimension; on the other hand, the events taking place at sea may have a great impact on the events on land. As such, it seems like, from the perspective of sea power, a rational choice to take actions at sea in this area, as the goal of using sea power is, as Tangredi (2002) argued, to influence the events on land.

The Gulf of Guinea is endowed with several attributes due to the geographicalal reality of that area. First of all, it has large reserves of mineral and marine resources, such as diamonds, gold and fisheries (Onuoha, 2010). Furthermore, the coastline of the Gulf of Guinea is considered as the optimum shipping route. Numerous natural ports are located along the coast of the Gulf of Guinea. There are more than 200 deep-water ports including Lagos, Abidjan, Dakar and Douala and so on. Moreover, ships travelling to these ports do not need to pass through any choke points and are not disturbed by bad weather. The maritime area of the Gulf of Guinea is an important node area of international routes from Cape Town to London, Cape Town to Dakar, Cape Black to Dakar, Dakar to Gibraltar. The advantageous geographicalal location and abundant natural resources make the Gulf of Guinea one of the busiest maritime areas in the world. According to statistics, the volume of maritime transport in this area is as high as 400 million tons per year (Kamaldeen, 2014).

The most prominent feature of this area is its reserve, production, and export of oil. The Gulf of Guinea is an important oil producing area. In addition to abundant reserves, the crude oil produced in this area is recognised as high-quality, as it contains less sulphide, which means there is a low refining cost and less environmental pollution (Cao, 2017).

[33] The Gulf of Guinea encompasses 20 countries, namely: Gambia, Guinean-Bissau, Senegal, Guinea, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, Togo, Benin, Nigeria, Cameroon, Equatorial Guinea, Sao Tome and Principe, Central African Republic, Gabon, Republic of Congo, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

Moreover, compared with the Middle East, it is relatively easy to transport oil from the Gulf of Guinea to the European and American markets, because it does not need to go through narrow straits or canals. In this case, the Gulf of Guinea has become the world's major oil export region. In 2018, West Africa's oil exports accounted for 68.9% of Africa's total oil exports and 9.7% of the world's total oil exports[34] (www.bp.com, 2020).

As the *EU Strategy on the Gulf of Guinea* noted, "the EU and the countries of the region have major common economic, developmental, commercial and security interests" (Council of the EU, 2014, p.2). On the one hand, the rich resources in the Gulf of Guinea are the foundation for the trade with Europe. The regional products, such as iron ore, cobalt and timber, and cocoa etc., are all crucial for the European market. On the other hand, "Europe imports about 13% of its oil and 6% of gas from West Africa" (Council of the EU, 2015a). Europe imports crude oil from Nigeria, Angola, Equatorial Guinea, and Gabon, as well as natural gas from Nigeria (ibid). In comparison with the crude oil form the Middle East, the oil export from the Gulf of Guinea benefits from the easy sea access due to its proximity to Europe.

As such, there is a clear need for the EU to maintain the maritime security off the coastline of the countries in the Gulf of the Guinea. First, both trade and energy import with the countries of the region depend on the secure shipping lanes in this maritime area. "Maritime trade, including energy supply routes to and from the Gulf of Guinea is largely conducted by companies based in the EU Member States, the primary export market for most countries in the region" (ibid).

[34] In 2018, the crude production in the African continent was: North Africa, 92.3 million tonnes; West Africa, 218.9 million tonnes; and East and South Africa, 6.3 million tonnes. The total production of crude in the world was 2249.3 million tonnes. [online] Available at < https://www.bp.com/content/dam/bp/business-sites/en/global/corporate/pdfs/energy-economics/statistical-review/bp-stats-review-2020-oil.pdf>, accessed on 1 August 2020.

Secondly, there is the direct security threat of "trafficking of narcotics, people and weapons into Europe" (Anyimadu, 2013, p.2) at sea from the Gulf of Guinea. And the EU's citizens living and working in that area need to be protected from "threats of drugs, terrorism, piracy and armed robbery, and other forms of crime emanating from the region" (Council of the EU, 2014, p.3).

Finally, this area is equally a target area of European investment in varied sectors. Maritime security is inseparable from the peace, security and prosperity of the whole region, even the landlocked countries. Therefore, the significant shared interests of the EU lead to the sustained attention to and active participation in the fight against the piracy, armed robbery at sea, and other maritime crime in the Gulf of Guinea.

6.3 Main threats at Sea in Gulf of Guinea

The EU identified five categories of threats in the Gulf of Guinea, which encompassed organised crime, piracy and armed robbery at sea, oil theft, illegal fishing, and unemployment (Council of the EU, 2014b). As mentioned in Section Two, almost every main issue in the Gulf of Guinea has a maritime dimension: some of the threats take place at sea, such as piracy and armed robbery at sea, as well as illegal fishing, while some of the threats have a marked maritime dimension, like organised crime and oil theft, and the threat of unemployment can be seen as one of the root causes of other threats.

6.3.1 Organised Crime

Organised crime was the primary security threat in the Gulf of Guinea (ibid). It referred to "the trafficking of drugs, human beings, arms, rough diamonds, counterfeit medicine, illegal waste[35], cybercrime and related money-laundering" (ibid, p.4). Organised crime can be seen ,as a direct threat to the security of the European countries. Although these crimes are organised and carried out in the Gulf of Guinea, the consequences greatly

[35] Examples of illegal waste include herbicides and pesticides, oil spill, untreated industrial wastes including nuclear and aerosol contaminants (Council of the EU, 2014, p.4).

affect the security of the European continent. Take trafficking of drugs from West Africa to Europe, for example. “Over the last decade, West Africa has become an increasingly important gateway for the smuggling of Latin American illicit drugs (mainly cocaine) to the European consumer market” (Luengo-Cabrera and Moser, 2016, p.1). Geographicalally, West Africa has become the transit hub for cocaine originating from South America, as the drug cartels in Colombia, Venezuela, and Brazil operate in collusion with their counterparts in Guinea-Bissau, Ghana, and Nigeria. Because of the lack of coastal monitoring capacities and the widespread corruption in these countries, transatlantic drug trade in these countries develop rapidly and pose a serious security challenge to the EU and the Member States. Therefore, there is a clear need for the EU to eliminate these organised crimes at sea and prevent them from happening at source.

6.3.2 Piracy and Armed Robbery at Sea

Piracy and armed robbery at sea is the threat originating at sea. According to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (1982), the distinction between piracy and armed robbery at sea depends on whether the crime occurred within 12 nautical miles of the coast or on the high seas. Jacobsen and Nordby (2015) divided piracy and robbery at sea in the Gulf of Guinea into four types: kidnapping-for-ransom, petro-piracy, unreported piracy, and petty piracy.

Kidnapping-for-ransom, which prevailed off the coast of Somali, is “neither the only nor the main form of piracy in the Gulf of Guinea” (ibid, p.21). In comparison with the kidnapping happening off the coast of Somali, the kidnapping in the Gulf of Guinea has twofold features: the hostages were held for a shorter time, but the kidnappers were more violent towards the hostages (Pigeon and Moss, 2020). Petro-piracy can be considered as oil theft occurring at sea, which are intertwined with other criminal activities on land.

Unreported piracy refers to the attacks which are not included in the statistics of the International Maritime Bureau. The attacked boats may lack the awareness of the

voluntary reporting system of International Maritime Bureau, or just have to keep silent as “they had been involved in a criminal activity at sea” (Jacobsen and Nordby, 2015, p.22). For instance, in 2018, it was recorded that there were six hijackings, thirteen attacked vessels, seventy-eight kidnapped crew members for ransom, and 130 hostages taken at sea in the Gulf of Guinea. The IMB however, believed that the number of attacks actually happening was twice the number of recorded ones.

Petty piracy refers to the theft from the vessels in harbour. It is less damaging but nevertheless widespread in the Gulf of Guinea.

6.3.3 Oil theft

Oil theft in the Gulf of Guinea is a kind of crime with organisation and sophistication (Jacobsen and Nordby, 2015). As the Council of the EU (2014) pointed out, “these activities cost government revenue, increase commercial security costs and discourage further investment” (p.4). And there is also the crime of violence towards the crewmembers and the pollution of the environment accompanying the petro-piracy.

6.3.4 Illegal fishing

Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated fishing (IUU) fishing damages the environment and destroys the fishing industry in the Gulf of Guinea. And the consequence of IUU fishing for the EU lies in damage to the normal fishing trade between the EU and related coastal countries of the region and in increasing migration pressures due to the collapse of the local fishing industry.

6.3.5 Unemployment

Unemployment is the inevitable result of the above threats. No matter whether it is piracy or illegal fishing, the criminal activities lead to the decline of the economy and the increase of youth unemployment rate in the West African countries. Take Nigeria as an example. In 2020, “Nigeria’s unemployment rate has climbed to 27.1%”, while “underemployment rate—which reflects those working less than 40 hours a week,

or in jobs that underutilise a person's skills, time, or education—has increased to 28.6%" (Kazeem, 2020). Additionally, unemployment leads more people to take risks of illegal immigration. "The number of migrants from West Africa trying to go to Europe has been multiplied by 10 between 2010 and 2016" (Council of the EU, 2020, p.1). Therefore, unemployment poses a direct security problem to the EU and the Member States.

6.4 EU's Response – a Comprehensive Approach

The EU's response to the maritime threats in the Gulf of Guinea is based on the *UNSC resolution 2018 (2011)* and *UNSC resolution 2039 (2012)*, and the *EU Maritime Strategy*[36], which insisted that the EU's strategy covers the worldwide space (The Council of the EU, 2014, p.4). While the Council revised the *EUMSS Action Plan* in 2018, a more concrete and sharp action plan on the Gulf of Guinea emerged:

> Continue to support the implementation of the Gulf of Guinea Strategy and Action Plan as well as national and regional efforts in the framework of the Yaoundé architecture and other regional and international initiatives, in particular the work done by the G7++ Friends of the Gulf of Guinea Group and by the EU Senior Coordinator for the Gulf of Guinea. Ensure coordination of EU projects in the Gulf of Guinea to contribute to maritime security in the area (Council of the EU, 2018a, p.27).

From the perspective of EU sea power, the EU sea power 'output' in the Gulf of Guinea is quite different from previous ones in the Horn of Africa as well as in the Mediterranean Sea. The diversification of maritime security threats in the Gulf of Guinea determines that the EU must adopt more diversified measures.

In comparison with piracy off the coast of Somalia, what happens in the Gulf of Guinea seems more complicated. Politically, Somalia was considered as a 'failed' nation, while "most West African countries have established rule of law, functioning state institutions

[36] Regarding the global maritime domain, European Union Maritime Security Strategy outlines that "The principles enshrined and the objectives identified in this strategy should be embedded in the implementation of existing and future regional EU strategies, such as those for the Horn of Africa and the Gulf of Guinea" (Council of the EU, 2014).

and relatively good governance" (Anyimadu, 2013, p.7) and are "able to contain insecurity to some extent" (ibid). From a legal point of view, the Eastern African countries, Seychelles, Mauritius, Kenya and Tanzania, "accepted suspects captured by navies, and receive international support to ensure that their justice sector is capable of proving fair trials and sufficient imprisonment" (ibid, p.8). However, in West Africa there is the lack of appropriate justice for the suspected pirates. Regarding the measure of anti-piracy, it is a proven fact that private armed security personnel on-board vessels was effective against piracy in the Indian Ocean, while they are not allowed by West African administrations (Anyimadu, 2013). And there is also a difference in attitude towards regional cooperation: the countries in the Horn of Africa have agreed to regional capacity-building, while some West African administrations need to be more coherent and more open to international capacity-building in the Gulf of Guinea (ibid).

EU Strategy on the Gulf of Guinea (Council, 2014) formulated three principles, which guide the EU's approach to deal with the maritime security issue. First, the EU's approach needs to be based on close cooperation with the countries as well as regional and international organisations. Secondly, the EU needs to adopt a comprehensive approach which addresses security, development, and governance issues at once. Thirdly, the EU needs to use its expertise from the previous counter-piracy operation – Operation Atalanta (Council of the EU, 2014).

Based on the first principle of the EU strategy in the Gulf of Guinea, the EU's involvement was founded on the Yaoundé architecture, which was set out to coordinate all the activities concerning maritime security in the Gulf of Guinea. In June 2013, 25 countries in West and Central Africa signed the *Code of Conduct concerning the Repression of Piracy, Armed Robbery against Ships, and Illicit Maritime Activity in West and Central Africa*, also known as the "Yaoundé Code of Conduct". Its objective is to promote regional maritime cooperation and a stable maritime environment that can

contribute to regional prosperity and provides the structure for joint operations, intelligence sharing and harmonised legal frameworks.

At the top of the Yaoundé architecture is the Interregional Coordination Centre, which connects the Regional Maritime Security Centre for Central Africa and the Regional Maritime Security Centre for West Africa. “The coastal space of the Gulf of Guinea is divided into 5 operational maritime zones where activities are coordinated by five Maritime Multinational Coordination Centres” (www.gogin.eu, 2020).Additionally, apart from deterring piracy and other maritime insecurity activities, the EU has a much clearer focus on addressing the root causes of the maritime threats and challenges than other foreign actors in the Gulf of Guinea (Jacobsen and Nordly, 2015).

To implement the *Strategy for the Gulf of Guinea* and its rolling *Action Plan*, the EU has adopted a comprehensive approach, which draws heavily on the instrument contributing to Security and Peace and the European Development Fund, and encompass a set of Programmes and Projects.

6.4.1 The Umbrella Programme – Critical Maritime Route Programme (CMR)

Among these Programmes and Projects launched by the EU, there is first of all an umbrella Programme – The Critical Maritime Routes Programme (CMR), which is currently implemented in 40 countries in the Gulf of Guinea, Western Indian Ocean and Wider Indian Ocean (www.criticalmaritimeroute.eu, 2020). The Critical Maritime Routes Programme encompasses 6 projects, among which three projects are clearly targeted at the Gulf of Guinea. They are CMR Gulf of Guinea 2013-2016 (CMRGO), Gulf of Guinea Inter-regional Network 2016-2020 (GoGIN), and Improving Port Security in West and Central Africa 2019-2022 (WeCAPS).

6.4.2 Critical Maritime Routes Gulf of Guinea 2013-2016 (CMRGO)

CMRGO was a project launched by the EU in 2013. It was a capacity-building project with the mission of strengthening the operational capabilities of the region. "By focusing on training and educational initiatives, the project provided the building blocks for improved operational cooperation" (RUSI, 2018, p.50). The results of CMRGO are fruitful: there were seven beneficiary countries of the region (Benin, Cameroon, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Nigeria, Sao Tome Principe and Togo), and two associate countries (Cote d'Ivoire and Ghana). And it "was highly effective in terms of its ability to directly reach beneficiaries" (RUSI, 2018, p.54). Relying on the two regional training institutions - Regional Academy of Maritime Science and Technology – Interregional Maritime Security Institute in Abidjan of Cote d'Ivoire, and Regional Maritime University in Accra of Ghana, it "provided over four academic courses and ten crisis response training activities, benefiting almost 800 participants" (ibid). It also set up two regional surveillance centres – Regional Maritime Surveillance Centre in Central Africa in Pointe-Noire of Congo, and Regional Maritime Surveillance Centre of West Africa in Abidjan of Cote d'Ivoire. CMRGO was highly praised by the stakeholders of the region. The then Deputy Secretary General of Economic Community of Central African States argued,

> The European Union sent us CRIMGO to support us in our fight against maritime insecurity, a major challenge for us. CRIMGO has been an essential instrument to establish the maritime security strategy at sub-regional level. Without CRIMGO, the interregional maritime security mechanism would not have worked (Critical Maritime Routes Programme, 2020).

6.4.3 Gulf of Guinea Inter-regional Network 2016-2020 (GoGIN)

CRMGO was concluded in October 2016, and followed by GoGIN. GoGIN was multi-functional, and its missions include coordination, capacity-building, development and information sharing. The core task of GoGIN is to establish "an effective and technically efficient regional information sharing network" (www.gogin.eu, 2020). Building on the successes of CRMGO, GoGIN covers nineteen beneficiary countries and sets up two regional surveillance centres, three regional institutions, and six coordination centres in the Gulf of Guinea. GoGIN has been considered as a "well-

established project model comprised of technical capacity building through training and education" (RUSI, 2018, p.46). The then Ambassador of the EUD in Cameroon noted, "Cooperation on security is a necessity, and the response to global and cross-border threats must be concerted. The EU's commitment to this cooperation is taking concrete form through the GoGIN project" (criticalmaritimeroutes.eu,2020).

6.4.4 Improving Port Security in West and Central Africa 2019-2022 (WeCAPS)

WeCAPS was launched in 2019 and will run till 2022. It aims to "help partner countries in West and Central Africa to adequately address increasing vulnerabilities related to port security" (WeCAPS, 2020). WeCAPS has three objectives: to strengthen compliance with International Ship and Port Facility Security standards, to increase preparedness and resilience to risks through detection and to handle illicit or dangerous goods, substances and activities, and to increase resilience when a crisis event occurs (attack, explosion, spill etc.)

WeCAPS covers a wide range of missions, from port governance, improved security mechanisms in port operations, public-private partnership, port sustainability to civil protection. This project benefits seventeen countries in the Gulf of Guinea. Take, for example, the first training activities of WeCAPS. In January 2020, Togo and Côte d'Ivoire became the first beneficiaries of the WeCAPS project. WeCAPS organised 4 training courses in three weeks for staff in the ports of Lomé and Abidjan. The first two training courses focused on 'firefighting', while two other training courses were mandatory under the ISPS Code and were targeted for port security staff, and port users. Apart from these 4 training courses, WeCAPS also set up a safety accident management exercise in the port for the security officers (criticalmaritimeroutes.eu, 2020).

In 2020, Covid-19 has plunged the entire world into a severe crisis. Facing the threat of pandemic, WeCAPS responds rapidly by adopting the measures for the twofold purposes: to protect the people working in the port and, in the meantime, to ensure the normal operation of the ports. At one time, it educated the staff working in the port to

ensure they have knowledge of protective measures and provided them the personal protective equipment. WeCAPS' civil protection experts set up the best practice guide for the beneficiary ports, which enable them to keep open (www.hellenicshippingnews.com, 2020; www.criticalmaritimeroutes.com, 2020).

6.4.5 From Corymbe to Coordinated Maritime Presence

While the EU seeks to become a global maritime security provider, it also encourages Member States to actively participate into the missions enhancing maritime security. The 2018 *the EUMSS Action plan* reiterated that

> Member States are encouraged to share lessons learned and best practices in their respective areas of expertise or regions, and are invited, on a voluntary basis, to step forward as 'champions' ('chefs de file') in the implementation of concrete actions identified in the Action Plan, in line with their national priorities or mandate (Council of the EU, 2018a, p.9).

Different from the EU's response to the maritime threats in the Horn of Africa or in the Mediterranean Sea, the EU relies more on enhancing cooperation with the countries of the region than on launching a CSDP maritime operation in the Gulf of Guinea on its own. However, facing the maritime security threats in the Gulf of Guinea, the EU Member States, which have no less interest in this maritime area than the EU, sent their warships for the purpose of deterring piracy and other forms of organised crimes.

France launched a maritime military operation – Operation Corymbe in May 1990 and it celebrated the 30th anniversary of the operation in 2020. According to the French Navy, the operation Corymbe has three objectives: to protect French nationals by the presence of a building capable of carrying out an evacuation operation and supporting French operations on land; to support the Gulf of Guinea countries in securing their maritime and regional approaches, in accordance with the Yaoundé process, and to strengthen international cooperation in the area (www.defense.gouv.fr, 2020).

During the thirty years, the operation Corymbe warships completed a wide range of missions in the Gulf of Guinea. Apart from the operations of sustaining the maritime

security alone or with the other actors in the operational maritime area, there is also the mutual support between the warships at sea and other French units stationed on the territory of Senegal, Cote d'Ivoire, Gabon, as well as of the other countries of the region. Although the number of naval warships deployed in the Gulf of Guinea is small (one or two warships at the time), they are an indispensable component of the entire military capability in this region.

Besides the Operation Corymbe, the French government, in collaboration with the government the United States, launched in 2011 a project named "Gulf of Guinea Maritime Security Sector Reform Support" to help fight maritime crimes in West Africa. The project had twofold missions: the training of the maritime administrators and information sharing on maritime crime in the region. The French government funded this project. Fourteen countries of the region benefited from this project (www. citinewsroom.com, 2015).

In 2013, four EU Member States – France, Portugal, Spain, and the United Kingdom – launched a joint operation to assist the West African countries to secure their maritime routes. The beneficiary countries were Benin, Cameroon, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Nigeria, Sao Tome and Principe, and Togo. The twofold purposes of the operation were to train the coast guards of these countries and to develop an information exchanging network (Glock, 2016).

Apart from French Navy, the Spanish Navy also sent warships on a train-and-assist mission to defend Spanish interests in the Gulf of Guinea. In April 2019, the Spanish Navy patrol vessel SERVIOLA successfully extricated a Nigerian merchant vessel from pirates (www.safety4sea.com, 2019). In May 2019, it cooperated with the forces of Equatorial Guinea and succeeded in rescuing the Dutch heavy lift ship BLUE MARLIN which was hijacked off the coast of Equatorial Guinea (Voytenko, 2019).

These experiences have proven that maritime military presence is effective in deterring piracy. In fact, "the shipping interests have petitioned Western governments to deploy maritime security assets to the region to ensure safety of navigation" (www.maritime-execusive.com, 2019). It has been proven important that "the maritime interest's capacity to get its case 'heard' in the policy-making and strategy-setting process" (Till, 2018, p778). The shipping industries, such as the Baltic and International Maritime Council, International Marine Contractor Association, International Chamber of Shipping, Institution of Fire Engineers and Oil Companies International Marine Forum, gathered the flag states and agencies from the Gulf of Guinea to deal with the continuing danger to seafarers operating. On a symposium on Maritime Security in the Gulf of Guinea, Dr. Grahaeme Henderson, Chair of the UK Shipping Defence Advisory Committee and Vice President of Shell Shipping & Maritime, declared that "the high level of piracy and armed robbery attacks in the Gulf of Guinea is not acceptable. …We need to take urgent action now" (www.maritime-executive.com, 2019).

Against this backdrop, the EU adopted the concept of 'a Coordinated Maritime Presence' in 2019 and the first test place for this concept will be the Gulf of Guinea (www.safety4sea.com, 2019). Instead of a CSDP mission, it will complement the EU's traditional military operations. The main difference between the newly planned Coordinated Maritime Presence and the CSDP maritime operation exists in the command structure, according to Mogherini (2019), in terms of CMP, "each participating EU nation would contribute its assets to the mission voluntarily, and those assets would remain within each nation's respective chain of command – not under a joint EU command" (www.maritime-execusive.com, 2019). And the then HR Mogherini also noted that all Member States had shown interest in this plan, and that Gulf of Guinea would be the first test place for this plan (Chibarirwe, 2019). Regarding the choice of the first test place, Mogherini argued that

> the reason why we have imagined to start from the Gulf of Guinea is that obviously this would require the ownership and the willingness of the coastal countries to have a coordinated approach also with us, and a shared interest in tackling, for instance, piracy or criminal organisations, attacks or threats posed to the maritime routes (ibid)

6.5 Conclusion

This chapter focuses on the EU's and the Member States' response to the maritime threats in the maritime area of the Gulf of Guinea. Arguably, the EU has adopted a quite different approach in the Gulf of Guinea from those in the horn of Africa and the Mediterranean Sea.

The EU's comprehensive approach heavily relies on the EU-funded CMR Programme. As an umbrella project, it covers three of the most relevant maritime areas for the EU – the Gulf of Guinea, the Horn of Aden, and the East South Asia. There are three concluded and ongoing projects targeting on the Gulf of Guinea – GRIMGO (Concluded), GoGIN, WeCAPS. These three projects cover different areas of maritime security, referring to external action, awareness information sharing, capability development, risk management and research and training. Facing the increasing piracy threat in the Gulf of Guinea, the EU introduced the concept of 'Coordinated Military Presence' and would apply it first in the Gulf of Guinea.

Having explored in detail the EU's three CSDP maritime military operations, this chapter has focused on the other forms of the EU sea power output. From the perspective of sea power, there are various forms and possibilities for the output of EU sea power. Under the triple-capability framework of sea power, the modern sea power can be defined as

> the combination of a nation-state's capacity for international maritime commerce and utilisation of oceanic resources, with its ability to project military power into the sea, for the purposes of sea and area control over commerce and conflict, and from the sea, in order to influence events on land by means of naval forces (Tangredi, 2002, p.3).

Hence, this chapter seeks to answer the question whether the EU fulfils the three functions of sea power in the Gulf of Guinea. First, the primary objective of the EU's CMR programme is just to protect the international maritime commerce and utilisation of oceanic resources. The strategic interests of the Gulf of Guinea for the EU lie on two

pillars: energy security and maritime transit hub. Therefore, the EU's involvement into the region completely fulfils the first function of sea power – to protect the international maritime commerce and utilisation of oceanic resources.

Second, the EU has decided to launch the Coordinated Maritime Presence in the Gulf of Guinea. Maritime military presence implies sea control in order to deter rivals and ensure the safety and security of vessels passing in this area. Based on the experience the EU gained in other maritime areas, the military presence has been proven effective in the fight against the piracy, illegal migration, and other maritime crime. That also explains why the EU extended the mandate of Operation Atalanta in the Horn of Africa and launched the Operation IRINI in 2020 after Operation Sophia ended. Therefore, the EU is determined to keep sea control in the Gulf of Guinea.

Third, as Styan (2016) argued, the strategic value of the African continent lies first on the maritime routes around it. The EU's efforts in the maritime domain in the Gulf of Guinea are not isolated, but part and parcel of an overall strategy towards the African continent. On 9 March 2020, the EEAS adopted a Joint Communication named *Towards a comprehensive Strategy with Africa* (2020), which was considered as the guideline of the EU's overall policies towards Africa. This document charted the EU's toolbox to maintain peace and security in Africa, including

> top political diplomacy, regular consultations, mediation for conflict prevention and resolution, restrictive measures, and cooperation on counter-terrorism, the fight against organised crime including trafficking in human beings, and maritime security (ibid, p.11).

As an important tool of EU foreign policy, maritime security plays an essential role in EU foreign policy with Africa. At the operational level, among the 18 EU-led CSDP missions[37] in 2020, nine missions and operations were carried out on the African

[37] The missions and operations under the EU CSDP framework in 2020 are: ALTHEA/BiH, EU NAVFOR Somalia , EUAM Iraq ,EUAM RCA, EUAM Ukraine, EUBAM Libya, EUBAM Moldova and Ukraine (This Mission is not managed by CSDP structures), EUBAM Rafah, EUCAP Somalia,

continent, and two maritime military operations – in the Mediterranean Sea and in the Horn of Africa. And the CSDP operations and missions cover military and civil aspects, as well as varied areas, such as capacity-building and awareness information sharing. Additionally, there are two ongoing projects under the umbrella project – CMR programme in the Gulf of Guinea. While ensuring the maritime security in the surrounding waters of African continent, the EU strengthens and deepens the partnership with Africa.

On the other hand, almost every important issue on the African continent has a maritime dimension. "Thirty-eight out of fifty-four African countries have a maritime border" (Glock, 2016). The maritime security closely interconnects with the politics, economy, and security of the whole continent. Therefore, it is a rational and effective way for the EU to resolve the political, economic, and security issues in Africa through the 'output' of sea power.

The three case studies of the thesis have something in common, that geographicalally the three cases all took place in the waters surrounding the African continent. The next case study of the thesis will focus on the Asian Pacific Ocean and seeks to answer the question how the EU involves itself in the maritime conflict in the South China Sea. It seeks to illustrate another form of the 'output' of EU sea power in this maritime area through the lens of sea power.

EUCAP Sahel Mali, EUCAP Sahel Niger, EULEX Kosovo, EUMM Georgia, EUNAVFOR MED IRINI EUPOL COPPS/Palestinian Territories, EUTM RCA, EUTM Somalia and EUTM-Mali.

Chapter 7 The Practice of EU Sea Power in the Asia-Pacific Region: EU Response to Maritime Disputes in the South China Sea as a Case Study

7.1 Introduction

Having outlined in the preceding chapter the practice of EU sea power in the Gulf of Guinea, this chapter explores the practice of EU sea power in the South China Sea and takes it as a case study to demonstrate other forms of EU sea power output through the lens of sea power theory.

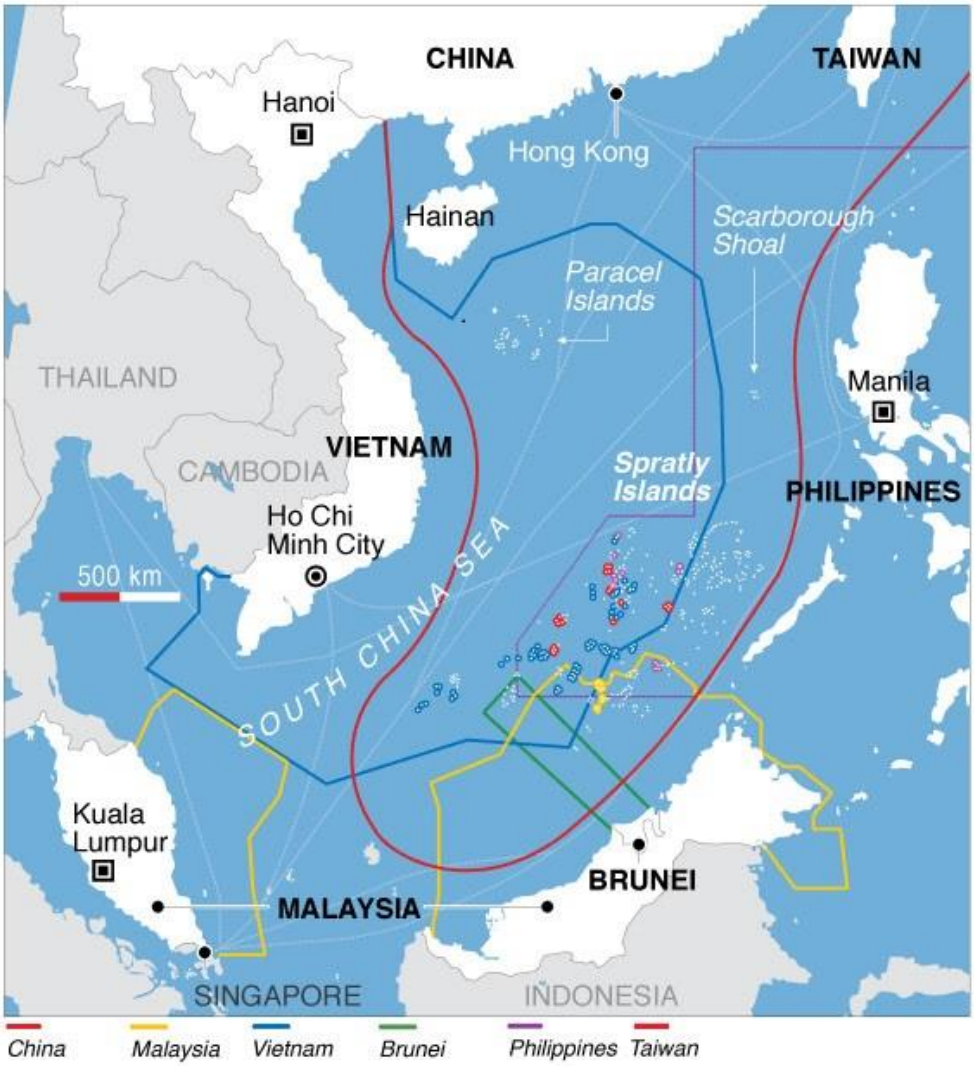
The thesis has completed three case studies on the output of EU sea power. They demonstrate diverse facets of the sea power. Operation Atalanta was the EU's first CSDP maritime military operation for the purpose of counter-piracy in the Horn of Africa, while Operation Sophia and Operation IRINI were launched successively in the Mediterranean Sea for two purposes: to disrupt the business model of human smuggling and trafficking networks and to implement the UN arms embargo in Libya. The third case study focused on the practice of EU sea power in the Gulf of Guinea, where the EU conducted a number of projects under the CMR Programme, as well as the projected Coordinated Maritime Presence in the near future. Although the three case studies focus on different facets of EU sea power, they share two common features. First, geographicalally, they all occurred in the waters surrounding the African continent or between Europe and Africa. Second, no matter whether piracy, human trafficking or the organised crime, they all fall into the category of maritime non-traditional security threat. Obviously, the struggle over sovereignty and territorial delimitation, as well as the strategic rivalry between China and the US in the South China Sea, belong to the category of traditional security issues.

But the main difference between what took place in the South China Sea and that in the Horn of Africa, in the Mediterranean Sea or the Gulf of Guinea lies in the nature of the conflict. However, as the EU's ambition is to be a global maritime security provider (Council of the EU, 2014a), the output of EU sea power is supposed to cover waters faraway. Therefore, the last case study of the practice of EU sea power focuses on the EU's intervention in the maritime disputes in the Asia-Pacific region.

The South China Sea has been a flashpoint in the Asia-Pacific region in the last decade. There are six countries, including China, Viet Nam, Malaysia, the Philippines, Indonesia and Brunei, that are involved in the disputes concerning overlapping sovereignty claims in this maritime area. Apart from the struggle over sovereignty and territorial delimitation, the competition between Beijing and Washington for influence in the region has increased tension. Moreover, there are numerous other non-traditional challenges, such as marine pollution, overfishing and ecological deterioration (Pejsova, 2016).

Map 5: Map showing the claimant states in the South China Sea

(Source: Voice of America)



Like other global actors, the EU has invested increasing attention to the development of situation in the South China Sea, and in 2012 expressed for the first time its concern in an official statement. From 2013 China began military construction on the Spratly islands and reefs. And the Philippines instituted arbitral proceedings against China at the Permanent Court of Arbitration in the same year. Under the circumstances, the EU has sought to deepen its involvement in the South China Sea to avoid becoming marginalised in security affairs in the Asia-Pacific region (Su, 2016). However, the EU did not launch a clear strategy towards South China Sea, nor did it establish associated policy options so far. Therefore, the EU's policy in this region in the future remains indefinite (Liu, 2015). As such, what is the European interest in the South China Sea in

the circumstances? And how does the EU exercise sea power there if it wants to be a maritime security provider? Based on an overview of a series of EU official statements, the thesis explores these questions through the lens of sea power.

This chapter is divided into six sections. The first serves as an introduction to sets the scene. The second section provides an overview of the EU's official statements on the South China Sea issue. Section Three focuses on the EU's interests in this region, including those that are economic, partnership based and identity in nature. Section Four outlines the EU's actual involvement in the South China Sea, covering declaratory diplomacy, arms trade and arms embargo, and freedom of navigation operations of Member States. Section Five focuses on the outcome of the practice of EU sea power in the region through the lens of sea power theory. The final section considers whether EU 'soft sea power' in the South China Sea has had an increasing impact on the EU's comprehensive strategy towards China.

7.2 Overview of EU's Statements on the South China Sea

As a matter of fact, it was after the end of the cold war that the then EC set out to invest attention in security issues in Asia. The Commission adopted the first official statement targeting Asia in 1994, named *Towards a New Asia Strategy, Communication from the Commission to the Council*. As the *Communication* pointed out, "The main thrust of the present and future policy in Asia is related to economic matters" (Commission of the EC, 1994, p. 3). Up until then the Asia policy of the EC had focused on the economic sphere instead of the political and security domains. It was not until 2007 when the Council adopted its first *Guidelines on the EU's Foreign and Security Policy in East Asia*, that security issues in East Asia were referred to. However, it used the euphemism "unresolved historical and territorial disputes" (Council of the EC, 2007, p.2), rather than specifying the South China Sea disputes by name.

In 2012, the Council of the EU launched a second *Guidelines on the EU's Foreign and Security Policy in East Asia*, marking the first time that maritime security issues in the South China Sea were specifically mentioned in an EU official statement. In this document, the EU systematically set out its stance and response to this issue. On the one hand there were these words: "The EU and its Member States, while not in any sense taking a position on these various claims" (Council of the EU, 2012, p.19). One the other hand, the EU recognised "the great importance of the South China Sea for the EU" (ibid, p.19), and would like to "encourage ASEAN and China to build on this foundation and agree on a Code of Conduct", as well as share the experience of the EU and its Member States ibid). Meanwhile, the EU attributed the root cause of the deteriorating maritime conditions to the emergence of "competitive nationalism" (ibid, p.5).

In 2014, the EU adopted the *European Union Maritime Security Strategy* and the rolling action plan, in which the South China Sea issue was not included. However, in the revised Action Plan of EUMSS of 2018, there were four articles concerning the 'Indian and Pacific Oceans' and 'South China Sea' was specified as:

> Support the application of UNCLOS and the establishment of mechanisms for regional maritime confidence building measures in the Asia Pacific region, especially in the South China Sea. Cooperate in that regard with partner countries and international organisations and promote the application of agreed frameworks (in particular UNCLOS) to ensure continued uninhibited access to high seas areas. Support regional ASEAN-led process and regional mechanisms such as the Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery against ships in Asia (RECAAP). Encourage the swift conclusion of the talks on a code of conduct which will further support the rules-based regional and international order (Council of the EU, 2018a).

This indicates that the issue of maritime security in the South China Sea has entered the overall framework of EU maritime security, and the EU is willing to play a more active role in this issue.

From September 2013, the Chinese government launched an infrastructure construction project aimed at actually controlling islands and reefs, arousing strong responses from the international community. In March 2016, the EU adopted the *Declaration by the High Representative on behalf of the EU on Recent Developments in the South China Sea* (EEAS, 2016a), in which the EU expressed concern about the deployment of missiles on islands. In the same year, after the South China Sea arbitration, the EU adopted another statement – *Declaration by the High Representative on behalf of the EU on the Award Rendered in the Arbitration between the Philippines and China* (EEAS, 2016b), in which the EU and its Member States "acknowledge the Award rendered by the Arbitral Tribunal" (EEAS, 2016b, p.1).

In 2016, the EU also adopted *A Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign and Security Policy*. Without directly mentioning South China Sea, it reiterated that

> In East and Southeast Asia, we will uphold freedom of navigation, stand firm on the respect for international law, including the Law of the Sea and its arbitration procedures, and encourage the peaceful settlement of maritime disputes. We will help build maritime capacities and support an ASEAN-led regional security architecture (Council of the EU, 2016b, p.38).

Based on the EU's official statements on the South China Sea, the EU's basic position on this issue can be summarised in four aspects: firstly, the EU does not take a position on claims to land territory and maritime space and on sovereignty aspects relating to claims (Council of the EU, 2012; EEAS, 2016a; EEAS, 2016b); secondly, the EU supports the application of UNCLOS in resolving the dispute, maintaining the maritime order, and upholding the freedom of navigation and overflight (EEAS, 2016a; EEAS, 2016b; EEAS, 2016c; EEAS, 2018); thirdly, the EU acknowledges the Award rendered

by the Arbitral Tribunal (EEAS, 2016b); and fourthly, the EU supports maritime capacity-building of the region and ASEAN-led regional security (EEAS, 2016; 2018).

7.3 EU's interests in the South China Sea

The EUMSS highlights a wide range of interests that the EU pursues in the maritime domain. In respect of the South China Sea, it refers to three: shipping and trade interests, partnership interests and identity interests.

7.3.1 Shipping and Trade Interests

Firstly, as Till (2013) pointed out, "Given its location, the South China Sea, as a sea, is clearly an area of major strategic importance for its proximity to critical shipping routes" (p.328), the EU needs to defend "the preservation of freedom of navigation, the protection of the global EU supply chain and of maritime trade, the right of innocent and transit passage of ships and the security of their crew and passengers" (Council of the EU, 2014, p.7).

According to Liu (2018), "The EU's interests in the South China Sea are largely in shipping and trade" (p.1). Hence, the EU's economic growth is inseparable from the peace and stability of the South China Sea, as China and the other claimants of the maritime dispute are all important economic and trading partners of the EU. As far as China-EU economic and trade relations are concerned, "China is the EU's biggest source of imports and its second-biggest export market. China and Europe trade on average over €1 billion a day" (European Commission, 2020b). In 2019, China-EU trade volume was 560.2 billion euros, accounting for 13.8% of the EU's total trade, second only to the United States (15%) (ibid). In terms of EU-ASEAN relations, "ASEAN as a whole represents the EU's 3rd largest trading partner outside Europe (after the US and China) with more than €237.3 billion of trade in goods in 2018. The EU is ASEAN's second largest trading partner after China, accounting for around 14% of ASEAN trade" (ibid).

Secondly, the South China Sea is equally an important channel for the EU to carry out foreign trade. The EU has significant interests in maintaining the freedom and safety of navigation in the South China Sea, as well as regional security and stability. The EU is far from Asia-Pacific geographically, and ocean transportation is the main way for the EU to conduct trade with Asia-Pacific countries. 90% of the EU's global cargo transportation needs to be carried out by sea, and 30% of it needs to pass through the South China Sea (Will, 2016). As mentioned in Chapter Three, the EU heavily relies on twofold maritime shipping routes: the southern corridor and the eastern corridor. The eastern corridor begins at the Malacca Straits, passes through the South China Sea and around Taiwan to the East China Sea. It connects the EU and its most important trading partners in Asia. Therefore, for the EU, the freedom of navigation in the South China Sea is related to its economic growth and trade interests, as the then High Representative Mogherini pointed out in the Asia-Europe foreign ministers meeting in 2015,

> The EU is an 'interested' party in a dispute putting China against Taiwan, Vietnam, the Philippines, Brunei and Malaysia over control of a crucial seaway. We oppose any attempt to assert territorial or maritime claims through the use of intimidation, coercion, force or any unilateral action which could cause further friction" (Bangkok Post, 2015).

Thirdly, The EU is currently committed to advancing free trade agreement negotiations with ASEAN and relevant Southeast Asian countries. Obviously, there is a clear need for a good atmosphere in the region for negotiations. In March 2017 an EU-ASEAN Joint Working Group was established to define the rules for a future ASEAN-EU region-to-region agreement (European Commission, 2017). With respect to individual countries of ASEAN, take Vietnam as an example. The EU is Vietnam's second largest trading partner and one of its largest export markets. Vietnam and the EU reached a consensus on the *EU-Vietnam Free Trade and Investment Agreement* in 2015. In 2020, the *Free Trade Agreement with Vietnam* entered into force. It set a good standard for

the development of trade relations between the EU and Southeast Asian countries, and also injected new ideas into the development of bilateral economic relations. In 2019, the Free Trade Agreement between the EU and Singapore came into force and the EU is in the process of negotiating with Thailand, Philippines, Malaysia and Myanmar (Commission, 2020). The EU, which insists on freedom of navigation in the South China Sea and the importance of international law in the settlement of maritime disputes, has established a good image internationally and well prepared for the three trade agreement negotiations.

7.3.2 Partnership Interests

The EUMSS highlights a number of maritime security interests that the EU is supposed to protect. Among them, there is partnership interests, because the Strategy "emphasises the importance of international partners and international maritime cooperation" (Council of the EU, 2014, p. 6). For the EU, the pressure and drive of Washington's 'Rebalance of Asia-Pacific' and 'Pivot to Asia' strategy is an important factor affecting the EU's involvement in the South China Sea issue.

Since the end of the Cold War, especially in the early twenty-first century, the status and role of the South China Sea in Washington's Asia-Pacific strategy have been rising. Since 2009, the United States launched the 'Rebalance of Asia-Pacific' and 'Pivot to Asia' strategy respectively and gradually intervened in the maritime disputes in the South China Sea. The strategic choice of Washington once worried Brussels (Rachman, 2015). After the American strategic centre of gravity shifted eastward, Europe's position in the alliance was bound to decline. Europe has to keep up with the pace of the United States in the Asia-Pacific region, and cannot be marginalised by the United States and Asian countries (Ren and Cheng, 2015).

At the same time, the United States also requires the EU to have coordinated actions in maritime security issues in the Asia-Pacific region. In February 2012, the then

American Secretary of State Clinton appealed to the EU to participate more actively in the Asia-Pacific region at the Munich Security Conference (Ohn and Richey, 2012). As a result, the then EU High Representative Ashton and Secretary Clinton issued an EU-United States joint statement in July, declaring that the United States and Europe share a common position on the South China Sea issue. In 2014, the EU and the United States launched a joint statement, in which they "urge ASEAN and China to accelerate progress on a meaningful code of conduct" and call on "all parties to take confidence building measures and to settle conflicts without threat or use of force and by diplomatic means in accordance with international law, including UNCLOS" (Council of the EU, 2014). In July 2015, at a meeting of senior United States and European diplomats, the United States urged the EU to support Washington's position in the South China Sea against Chinese infrastructure construction and militarisation of islands and reefs (Brunnstrom and Ali, 2015). Washington asked Brussels to "be a little more clear in terms of backing up these principles, a little bit more forward-leaning approach that would support, for example, the idea of a halt to further reclamation, further militarization, would be very useful" (ibid). As a matter of fact,

> the US's failure to ratify UNCLOS is a diplomatic weakness in the sense that it deprives the EU of the moral high ground in addressing freedom of navigation issues with China, … at the same time, Europeans as external stakeholders with legitimacy to defend UNCLOS are only issuing statement that reiterate the importance of international law (Duchatal, 2016, p.55-56).

Therefore, there are partnership interests for the EU in coordinating with the United States in the maritime disputes of the South China Sea.

Additionally, when the EU manages relations with China, the most crucial player in the South China Sea's maritime disputes, partnership interests equally play a role. The EU reiterated that

> EU policy on China shall form part of a rounded policy approach to the Asia-Pacific region, taking full advantage, and full account of the EU's close relations with partners such as the United States, Japan, Korea, the ASEAN countries, Australia, New Zealand and others, as well as the EU's stake in Asia's security (Council of the EU, 2016, p.6).

7.3.3 Identity Interests

In the EUMSS and other official documents concerning maritime security, the EU reiterates the role of international law, especially the UNCLOS, in the peaceful settlement of maritime disputes. The EU has several identities while being involved in the South China Sea issue, and these identities drive the EU to play a role.

Firstly, the EU and the Member States have the identity of being a party to UNCLOS. In 1998, the EU formally became the first international organisation contracting party to the UNCLOS. So far, the EU is still the only organisation contracting party to UNCLOS. The EU is also the seat of the International Court of Justice, the Permanent Court of Arbitration in The Hague, and the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea which are the three main United Nations agencies for the settlement of maritime disputes.

The identity of the EU being a party to UNCLOS made it highly qualified to participate in international maritime governance and opened up the basic channels for participating in international maritime affairs. While facing issues concerning the South China Sea, the status of the EU enables it to put defence of the international law of the sea in first place when it intervenes in the South China Sea. Take, for example, the EU's statement issued in March 2016 on the Award rendered in the Arbitration between the Philippines and China. In this official response to the ruling of the Arbitration Tribunal, the EU insisted the on the stance whereby there is a clear endorsement of the principles of international law in the South China Sea, even though several Member States agreed to the terms with a certain reluctance. As Fallon (2016) argued, "the EU is founded on rules established to settle international relations, so it cannot renege on its very founding principles. If it did it would lose all credibility" (p.3-4).

On the other hand, the EU has the identity of maritime security provider, as the then HR/VP Mogherini argued, “There was a growing demand for an EU role as a maritime security provider not only in our region, but also further away” (Pejsova, 2019, p.1). The EU’s low-key security profile, technical capacity, and reputation as a normative power intertwine and promote the EU to play a corresponding role in maintaining the security and stability of the South China Sea (ibid).

7.4 EU’s Response in the South China Sea

As Pejsova (2019) pointed out, “(the South China Sea) is not an existential threat to the EU’s security” (p.4). However, as mentioned in the preceding section, given the fact that the EU has a considerable economic, partnership and identity interests in the South China Sea, the EU needs to adopt a more comprehensive and balanced strategy to protect its interests, and to play a more active role in the region.

Obviously, China and the United States are the major countries that profoundly impact the development of the situation in the South China Sea. As Pejsova (2019) pointed out, the strategic rivalry between China and the US could lead to instability in that region. On the one hand, “China’s increasingly imperious assertion of its territorial claims and build-up of artificial islands in the disputed South China Sea … is an ongoing source of concern for the international community and maritime user-states” (ibid, p.3). On the other hand, “The US and other nations (including France and the United Kingdom) have stepped up their naval presence to protest against Beijing’s actions and promote freedom of navigation, resulting in the increasing militarisation of the regional waterways, with the potential to escalate into a more dangerous conflict – especially given the current state of US-China tensions” (ibid).

The competition between Beijing and Washington in the South China Sea involves the struggle for geopolitical interests and dominance of the regional order. Washington interprets Beijing’s infrastructure construction and facility deployment as an attempt to control the whole South China Sea maritime area and travels more frequently through

the operational area in the name of preserving the freedom of navigation (Wu, 2018). As a result, China has accelerated its surveillance and deployment operations in the region. The South China Sea has significant relevance strategically for China, as it is an essential channel for the Chinese Navy to sail on the high seas. From 2000, China began to build the Yulin naval base, which is located at the southernmost tip of Hainan Island. With its capabilities of strategic nuclear submarines, attack submarines, and surface vessels, it is considered the most strategically important military base in the South China Sea.

Map 6: Map showing the location of Yulin Naval Base of the Chinese Navy

Therefore, the conflict in the South China Sea is a traditional geopolitical conflict, which is different from what took place in the EU's previous maritime military inventions in the waters surrounding the African continent. As a result, the EU follows a different approach when intervening in the maritime disputes in the South China Sea. This approach can be divided into two parts: soft sea power at the EU level, and hard sea power at the Member States level. Instead of sending warships into the South China Sea, the EU uses its identity of being a passionate defender of international law as a kind of soft power and stands on the moral high ground diplomatically. Meanwhile, the EU encourages the Member States to be involved in the South China Sea in two ways.

France and the United Kingdom (which was at the time a Member State of the EU) deployed their warships there to defend freedom of navigation. And the arms trade between the EU Member States and the ASEAN countries was increased in order to maintain the military balance in that region.

7.4.1 Declaratory Diplomacy Based on International Law

Issuing reactive statements is the main form of the EU's response to the security issue in the South China Sea (Duchâtel, 2015). "The EU reiterates these general principles whenever a major development occurs in the South China Sea" (ibid, p.55). In every official statement adopted by the EU on the South China Sea, international law, especially UNCLOS, is the basis of the EU's narrative.

As the first international organisation contracting party to the UNCLOS, the EU embraces this identity as part of a foreign policy toolbox. Obviously, the EU occupies the moral high ground given that the US failed to ratify the UNCLOS, and China has refused to accept the Arbitral Tribunal's ruling. In terms of the EU's response to the maritime security issue in East Asia, (Duchâtel 2015) outlined the characteristics of the EU's response as "principled neutrality" and the principles here included "international law, especially UNCLOS, self-restraint, crisis management diplomacy and the importance of clarifying claims" (ibid, p.53).

As a matter of fact, since 2012 the South China Sea issue has appeared constantly in the official statements of the EU, including the EU's regional strategy towards East Asia[38], the EU's official statements towards the specific questions[39], and the EU's joint

[38] See Council of the EU, "Guidelines on the EU's Foreign and Security Policy in East Asia", 11492/12, Brussels, 15 June, 2012.

[39] See Council of the EU, "Declaration by the High Representative on behalf of the EU on Recent Developments in the South China Sea", 126/16, 3 March, 2016; "Declaration by the High Representative on behalf of the EU on the award rendered in the Arbitration between the Republic of the Philippines and the People's Republic of China", 442/16, 15 July, 2016.

statements with a third party, such as with the United States[40], Japan[41], Vietnam[42], Philippines[43] and ASEAN[44]. Moreover, from 2014, the G7 Group, of which the EU is a member, has consistently committed itself to the maritime disputes issue in the South China Sea. In 2014 and 2015, the EU equally criticised China on the meeting of UNCLOS[45].

7.4.2 Arms trade with ASEAN Countries and Arms Embargo against China

In the first official statement on the maritime issue of the South China Sea, *Guidelines on the EU's Foreign and Security Policy in East Asia* (Council of the EU, 2012), the EU attributed the deteriorating security trend there to "China's economic development, more active diplomacy, and increasing (and untransparent) defence expenditure" (p.5).

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[40] See Council of the EU, "Joint EU-US Statement on the Asia-Pacific Region", 12 July, 2012; "EU-US Summit: Joint statement", 26 March, 2014.

[41] See European Commission, "21st Japan-EU Summit, Tokyo, 19 November 2013 Joint Press Statement", MEMO/13/1015, 19 November, 2013; "The EU and Japan Acting together for Global peace and Prosperity, 22th EU-Japan Summit Joint Press Statement", STATEMENT/14/151, 7 May, 2014; "23th Japan-EU Summit, Tokyo", Joint Press Statement, MEMO/15/5075, May 29, 2015; "EU-Japan Summit Joint Statement, Tokyo", 17 July, 2018.

[42] See European Commission, "Joint press statement between the Socialist Republic of Vietnam and the European Union", STATEMENT/14/257, 25 August, 2014; "Press Statement by the President of the European Commission Jean-Claude Juncker, the President of the European Council Donald Tusk and the Prime Minister of Vietnam Nguyen Tan Dung, Brussels", STATEMENT/14/600, 15 September 2014.

[43] See European Commission, "Remarks by President Barroso following his meeting with President Benigno Aquino III of the Philippines", Brussels, SPEECH/14/600, 15 September 2014.

[44] See European Commission, "Joint communication, The EU and ASEAN: A partnership with a Strategic Purpose", JOIN (2015) 22 FINAL, 18 May, 2015.

[45] See Council of the EU, "United Nations Convention on Law of the Sea: Report of the International Tribunal for Law of the Sea", 9 June 2014; "United Nations Convention on Law of the Sea: Report of the International Tribunal for Law of the Sea", 8 June 2015.

Therefore, the EU seeks to keep a strategic balance in the region by selling arms to ASEAN countries, while retaining the arms embargo against China.

One of the EU's important economic interests in Southeast Asia is the arms trade, in which it occupies a considerable share of the Southeast Asian arms market. The EU seeks to extend its influence in the South China Sea by strengthening arms sales to Southeast Asian countries. Among these countries, "the six states with territorial claims in the South China Sea have made the largest commitments to increase their military spending" (Wezeman, 2019, p.ix). Furthermore, naval weapons and equipment occupy a high proportion of imports in these countries (Heiduk, 2018). For instance, Europe surpassed the US and began to "dominate the Southeast Asian market for littoral and Frigate/corvette vessels" from 2015 (Minnik, 2015).

Historically, none of the ASEAN countries were equipped with submarines. Surprisingly, in 2015, Singapore, Malaysia and Vietnam, Indonesia all began to equip their navies with the submarines. Meanwhile, Taiwan, Thailand and the Philippines have planned additional procurement. Among these countries, Singapore procured six refitted submarines from Sweden and two from Germany, and Malaysia procured two French submarines (ibid). As Heiduk (2018) pointed out, "For the six littoral states of the South China Sea, the volume of arms imports from the EU's Member States has grown rapidly in an absolute terms between 2007 and 2017" (p.18). Table 7.1-7.5 reveal the trend of EU arms export to the claimant states of South China Sea between 2013-2019. Among these countries, Brunei depended heavily on the German supplier of arms (www.army-technology.com, 2017). Indonesia was a major client of Eurofighter (Arif and Chairil, 2020). Most of Malaysia's arms were purchased from European states (Wezeman, 2019). There were not many arms imported by the Philippines because of that country's comparatively small domestic economy. Vietnam has "remained heavily dependent on Russia for its arms imports but has started to

diversify and seek weapons from European states, the USA, India and others" (ibid, p.43).

EU Arms Export to Claimant States of South China Sea between 2013-2019 (M Euro)

Table 7: EU Arms Export to Brunei

Year	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Vessels of war, (surface or underwater) special naval equipment, accessories, components and other surface vessels	4,39	-	2,21	-	-	-	-
Total Arms Export Value	4,90	2,20	21,60	28,87	1.41	0,50	0,10

Table 8: EU Arms Export to Indonesia

Year	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Vessels of war, (surface or underwater) special naval equipment, accessories, components and other surface vessels	3,88	2,32	45,04	0,49	2,01	23,43	19,12
Total Arms Export Value	135,75	72,89	234,05	248,74	240,56	169,45	80,61

Table 9: EU Arms Export to Malaysia

Year	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Vessels of war, (surface or underwater) special naval equipment, accessories, components and other surface vessels	-	-	-	2,74	3,60	3,05	2,30

Total Arms Export Value	218,25	91,21	37,19	44,30	46,95	78,59	24,62

Table 10: EU Arms Export to the Philippines

Year	**2013**	**2014**	**2015**	**2016**	**2017**	**2018**	**2019**
Vessels of war, (surface or underwater) special naval equipment, accessories, components and other surface vessels	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Arms Export Value	0,03	11,01	52,67	1,99	7,44	16,24	21,21

Table 11: EU Arms Export to Vietnam

Year	**2013**	**2014**	**2015**	**2016**	**2017**	**2018**	**2019**
Vessels of war, (surface or underwater) special naval equipment, accessories, components and other surface vessels	-	0,93	23,98	-	-	-	1,07
Total Arms Export Value	7,16	1,65	105,31	1.43	9,29	18.70	20,94

(Source: European Commission)

While still selling arms to the ASEAN littoral countries in the region, the EU continues to hold onto the arms embargo against China. The EU embargo on arms exports to China was imposed in 1989 (Council of the EU, 1989). China has attempted several

times to persuade the EU to lift the arms embargo, as the then Chinese Prime Minister Jiabao Wen noted in 1999 when meeting the EU leaders in Brussels: "On the two issues of lifting the arms embargo against China and recognizing China's full market economy status, we have been working hard for 10 years. But the solution has been elusive" (Rettman, 2012). Regarding lifting of arms embargo on China, the EU Member States failed to reach a unanimous decision on this issue. As Odgaard (2018) argued, "The arms embargo remains an inexpensive way for the EU to signal disapproval of Chinese action in the security field …" (p.25). Moreover, the EU decided to further scrutinise and limit "exports of specific sensitive equipment and technologies for end-use in Hong Kong" (Council of the EU, 2020) after the adoption of the National Security Law in Hong Kong by the Chinese Central Government in 2020. Equally, the UK announced that it would extend the EU arms embargo to Hong Kong (Department of International Trade of UK, 2020). This further demonstrates that the EU has adopted the arms embargo against China as an important tool for participating in Asia-Pacific security and political affairs.

As discussed in Chapter Two, the elements of sea power include the various factors from economic, political, institutional and military perspectives. Admittedly, the EU's ascendancy in the defence technical field and the arms trade, as part of its policy instruments, can equally be seen as part of EU sea power. The EU has transformed its technological superiority into an ability to balance the regional security situation. Through these two instruments - arms trade and arms embargo - the EU achieves its goal of intervening in military issues in the Asia-Pacific region and maintaining influence.

7.4.3 Freedom of Navigation Operations

According to Pejsova (2019), "The prospect of the EU deploying a mission or operation within its CSDP framework … is highly unlikely, if not impossible" (p.4). As the security crisis in the South China Sea does not pose an existential threat to the EU, a

consensus on an EU maritime intervention in the South China Sea among all Member States will not be feasible.

However, as shown in the preceding case study - the practice of EU sea power in the Gulf of Guinea - the EU adopted an approach that, in the absence of action by the EU as a whole, encourages Member States to act individually. As a result, France and the UK deployed their blue water naval capabilities into the South China Sea for the purpose of defending freedom of navigation. As Pejsova (2019) noted, "Although both navies operate in their national capacities, their actions effectively protect the interests of all European countries" (p.3).

On June 5 2016, at the Shangri-la Dialogue in Singapore, French Defence Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian (2016) declared that

> France will continue to support, by operating her ships and flying her aircraft wherever international law permits and as determined by operational need. Several times a year, French naval vessels pass through the waters in this region and they will continue to do so (www.iiss.org).

There are several reasons behind the French decision to patrol in the South China Sea. Geographicalally, France is present in the Indo-Pacific region due to its overseas territories[46], with 1.5 million French people and 8,000 soldiers stationed there. Economically, France relies heavily on the stability and prosperity of the Asia-Pacific region: 93% of the French exclusive economic zone is located in the Indian and Pacific Oceans (www.diplomatie.gouv.fr, 2020). In terms of international law, France is committed to defending the freedom of navigation in the South China Sea.

7.5 Outcome of EU Sea Power Practice in the South China Sea

As was argued in the preceding section, the practice of EU sea power in the South China Sea demonstrates two intertwined aspects. As a "soft sea power", the EU adopts the

[46] They are: Mayotte and La Réunion islands, Scattered Islands and French Southern and Antarctic Territories, New Caledonia, Wallis and Futuna, French Polynesia and Clipperton.

Declaratory Diplomacy Strategy to ensure its involvement at the EU level. As a "hard sea power", the EU maintains the arms embargo against China, while encouraging the arms trade between its Member States and ASEAN countries, and the Freedom of Navigation Operations launched by the French Navy. However, does EU sea power have any impact on the region? And how best to assess this impact? Given the fact that the EU is a sea power, the outcome of EU sea power practice in the South China Sea must be examined within the framework of sea power theory. Sea power has been defined as possessing three abilities: the ability to protect international commerce and the utilisation of oceanic resources, to perform sea control by naval means, and to influence the events on land by events at sea (Tangredi, 2003). As a matter of fact, the international shipping in the South China Sea keeps normal during the disputes, and the EU did not take any military initiative, so the central issue is whether EU sea power can influence the events on land.

Obviously, for the EU, China is most important variable in the maritime security issue of the South China Sea. There are two reasons for this. On the one hand, China is not only the main claimant in the territorial disputes in the South China Sea, but also seen as the party responsible for these conflicts. The EU argues that "China's economic development, more active diplomacy, and increasing (and untransparent) defence expenditure" (Council of the EU, 2012, p.5) was the major cause of the conflict. On the other hand, even the EU does not take a stance on specific disputes in the region and the principles that the EU insists on are in conflict with those of China, which bitterly opposes the "internationalisation, multilateralisation and judicialisation" of the South China Sea issue (Liu, 2015). Against this background, the involvement of the EU in the South China Sea becomes part and parcel of the EU's overall strategy towards China. Fallon (2016) described it as "principle pragmatism", which is "based on a pragmatic pursuit of its own interests on one hand and on upholding the principles of international law on the other" (p.1). According to Fallon, "the EU certainly has no interest in antagonising China" (p.2).

However, the observations in the preceding sections show that the EU's response to the maritime security issue in the South China Sea has become an invaluable tool to handle relations with China. On some occasions, the EU seems to use this issue to antagonise China deliberately (Liu, 2015). The EU continues to express its concern about the South China Sea issue on international and multilateral occasions. Moreover, the South China Sea issue has become an element of EU's new strategy towards China (Council of the EU, 2016). In this strategy the EU highlights two principles - "reciprocal benefit" and "rules-based international order" (EEAS, 2016) - and the South China Sea is the domain where the EU insists upon the principle of rules-based international order. It has become one of the big issues in the meetings between Beijing and Brussels. For instance, in 2018 the South China Sea issue was addressed in the *Joint Statement of the leaders of China and the EU* as

> China, the EU and its Member States are parties to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and respect the maritime order based on international law. The EU welcomes the ongoing consultations between China and ASEAN countries aimed at the conclusion of an effective Code of Conduct (CoC) for the South China Sea. The EU and China call upon all relevant parties to engage in dialogue, to settle disputes peacefully, and to refrain from actions likely to increase tensions (Council of the EU, 2018c, p.2).

This meant that China and the EU have negotiated on this issue and reached a certain degree of consensus (Liu and Xie, 2018). From this perspective, the EU succeeds in influencing the events on land by sea power.

7.6 Conclusion

This chapter focuses on the EU's and the Member States' response to the maritime disputes in the South China Sea. Drawing on the discussions presented in this chapter, a number of points become clear.

First of all, since 2012, the South China Sea issue began to appear in the EU's official documents. Based on a series of official EU statements, the EU's basic position on this issue has four elements: a) the EU does not take a position on claims to land

territory and maritime space and on sovereignty aspects relating to claims; b) the EU supports the application of UNCLOS in resolving the dispute, maintaining the maritime order, and upholding the freedom of navigation and overflight; c) the EU acknowledges the Award rendered by the Arbitral Tribunal on the sovereign dispute between China and the Philippines; and d) the EU supports the maritime capacity-building in the region and an ASEAN-led regional security architecture.

Secondly, due to the location of the South China Sea, the EU has shipping and trade interests, partnership interests and identity interests. China and the other claimants of the maritime disputes are all important economic and trading partners of the EU. Additionally, the EU is currently committed to advancing free trade agreement negotiations with ASEAN and relevant Southeast Asian countries: peace and stability in the region will provide a good atmosphere for negotiations. The South China Sea is equally an important channel for the EU to conduct foreign trade. Consequently, the EU has important interests in maintaining the freedom and safety of navigation in the South China Sea, as well as regional security and stability.

Apart from the economic interests, the EU has also partnership interests in the South China Sea. The EU always "emphasises the importance of international partners and international maritime cooperation" (Council of the EU, 2014). The partnership and the coordination with the US are also the EU's interests in the South China Sea. In order to align itself with the United States, the EU also needs to express its support for the United States on the South China Sea.

As the first international organisation party of the UNCLOS, the EU has considerable interest in defending international law in the South China Sea. The EU's aspiration to be a global maritime security provider means it wants to play an important role in the South China Sea.

Having all these interests in the South China Sea, the EU adopts an approach which encompasses declaratory diplomacy, arms trade and freedom of navigation operations. From the perspective of sea power, the EU's approach in the South China Sea (in other words, the output of the EU sea power in the South China Sea) is unique and irreplaceable.

The EU launched maritime military operations in the Horn of Africa and the Mediterranean Sea, and uses instruments contributing to Security and Peace (IcSP) and the European Development Fund (EDF) to set up various maritime security projects in the Gulf of Guinea. In the maritime areas mentioned above, EU sea power comes from its naval power and economic power; that is the EU outputs the sea power through both military means and financial means.

However, the output of EU sea power in the South China Sea is restricted by a number of conditions. First, the main security threat in the South China Sea is different from the non-traditional security threats in the surrounding waters of the African continent. As a matter of fact, the geopolitical rivalry between China and the US is the most visible and precarious security challenge in the South China Sea. In such a case, the EU cannot launch any CSDP military maritime operation due to the EU's decision-making process. Hence, the EU outputs sea power through another form. In other words, the EU outputs a kind of "soft sea power". The EU's identity of party of UNCLOS and defender of international law give it irreplaceable influence in the South China Sea. Without sending a warship flying the EU flag, the EU spreads norms and regulations in the region.

For the other actors in the South China Sea, the EU's identity as a defender of international law matters. The US needs the EU when it confronts China in the legal field, because it is not yet a party to UNCLOS. The fact that China refuses to accept the Award rendered by the Arbitral Tribunal caused common distrust in the international

community, while the EU occupies the moral high ground on the world stage. As the claimant countries in the sovereignty dispute in the South China Sea need a neutral mediator, the EU is especially qualified for this role because of its image as a defender of international law. As previously noted, the practice of EU sea power in the South China Sea is mainly in the form of soft sea power through the EU's declaratory diplomacy based on international law. Meanwhile, the arms trade between EU Member States and the claimant countries, as well as the freedom of navigation operations conducted by the EU Member States, can be seen as hard sea power of the EU deployed in that region.

Regarding the EU's response to the dispute in the South China Sea, there is the thorny question of its relations with China. Even though the EU claims not to take sides in the maritime sovereign dispute, merely the EU's involvement will antagonise China, as "Beijing has clearly signalled that it considers the territorial disputes in that sea to be a series of bilateral issues between China and each of its neighbours, rather than a multilateral issue" (Fallon, 2016, p.12). As a matter of fact, the maritime security issue in the South China Sea has become a lever in the EU's comprehensive strategy towards China. In 2016, the EU adopted the joint communication, named "Elements for a new EU strategy on China", and expressed its concern on the maritime disputes between China and other claimant countries (European Commission, 2016, p.11). As such, the South China Sea became a fresh issue on which the EU can exert pressure on China. From the perspective of sea power, as one function of sea power is to influence the events on land through the events at sea, the EU uses the maritime disputes in the South China Sea as a powerful lever in its comprehensive strategy towards China. In recent years, the EU has increasingly emphasised the "reciprocal benefit" and "rules-based international order" (ibid, p.1) in both political and economic terms in the relationship with China. It is foreseeable that the South China Sea issue will appear more frequently on the negotiating table between the EU and China.

Chapter 8 Presenting the Findings

8.1 Introduction

Existing literature shows that the maritime dimension of EU capabilities is relatively under-researched. Few studies examine in a comprehensive manner the EU's achievement in maintaining maritime security from the perspective of sea power, a sea power which integrates geostrategic, economic, political, and military factors. The EU has made significant progress in building maritime security since 2008, when it played a leading role in a counter-piracy operation in the Horn of Africa. With that, the EU became more visible and proactive in the maritime security sphere. The existing literature relating to this subject was inconclusive on a number of issues, and, therefore, this investigation has sought to answer the following question: Why is the EU a sea power?

By conducting a critical analysis of the sea power theory in general and the EU's resources and capabilities in the maritime security sphere, the thesis has studied not only the material and aspirational conditions that the EU possess, but also how the EU has used these conditions to play a role as a global maritime security provider in different maritime areas such as the Horn of Africa, the Mediterranean Sea, the Gulf of Guinea and the South China Sea.

Instead of repeating the findings already presented in each of the preceding chapters, Chapter Eight seeks to present a number of conclusions and reflections, including the important theoretical and empirical findings, as well as the suggestions for future research. Clearly, answering the question why the EU is a sea power in the making depends on how we benchmark the concept of sea power. Sea power, as a geostrategic term which emerged more than a hundred years ago, needs to be understood in a broader

sense. The thesis conducts a historical and critical overview of the notion of sea power and outlines the modern sea power theory, which has a far broader meaning than 'naval power' and includes many elements. Moreover, this thesis proposes an evaluating framework from the perspective of sea power in respect to maritime security. Although the research object of this thesis is EU sea power, the theoretical findings on sea power theory can be applied to other regions and countries in the world.

8.2 Theoretical Findings: Understanding Sea Power

This thesis has challenged a number of existing assumptions regarding sea power theory. As this thesis highlights repeatedly, answering the question 'why the EU is a sea power' depends on how we benchmark 'sea power'. As Mahan (1889) used the term 'sea power' without giving a clear definition, there have been disagreements as to what this notion means. The salient divergence on the interpretation of 'sea power' is that it is a synonym for naval power or it is a more inclusive and expansive concept. Based on the historical overview of the concept 'sea power', the thesis asserts that the concept of sea power should be interpreted in its widest sense in the era of globalisation, that is, 'sea power' is neither a military term nor a synonym of naval power, but rather a geopolitical term. Sea power theory is a branch of geopolitical theory, "the spatial study of the relationships among states and the implications of these relationships for the morphology of the political map as a whole" (Parker, 1994, p. 170). The geopolitical theory, however, is an integral part of realist International Relations theory. Hence, sea power theory can be seen as the study of the relationships among states at sea from a realist perspective.

'Sea power' is the key concept of this thesis. Sea power is composed of two parts. One part is the 'input' of sea power, implying that a variety of preconditions are necessary to generate sea power. The other part is the 'output' of sea power or the security and political purposes which sea power achieves.

The inputs of sea power, or the elements of sea power have been interpreted differently. The thesis argues that in the era of globalisation, the geographical, economic, political institutional and military factors are the essential elements of sea power.

First, geographical factors still play an important role in the generation of sea power. 'Being maritime', as a kind of geographical reality, can shed considerable light on every aspect of a nation state. In terms of security, a nation state with long sea border faces the challenges coming from the sea. In terms of the economy, it has access to abundant marine resources as well as port resources, thus gaining access to maritime transportation. Moreover, in the era of globalisation, SLOCS and choke points are of greater importance than ever before. Thus, geographical factors, as important determinants in geopolitical thought, are preconditions for the generation of sea power.

Maritime interests are another factor that affects the generation of sea power. There is a clear need for those countries which depend heavily on international trade and shipping to create and sustain good order at sea. Moreover, those countries that profit from globalisation tend to have greater economic power and technological strength to develop and maintain their position of sea power. Thus, economic factors play a greater role in the generation and development of sea power in a globalised international environment.

However, geographical factors and maritime economic interests are only the preconditions for generating and maintaining sea power. It is the awareness on a national level of the value of the sea and maritime security that is the decisive factor. No matter the geography or the maritime interests, they can be seen as the circumstance over which a country has little control. There is a clear need for a country to enhance the willingness to protect its maritime interest by developing its capability. This clarity of vision about the value of the sea and maritime security plays an essential role in the national decision-making process. It implies a clear understanding of what is at stake,

and what steps must be taken, leading to maritime capacity-building. In terms of capacity-building in the maritime security sphere, cross-sectoral institutions are constituents of sea power.

Notwithstanding that sea power is not a synonym of naval power, naval forces are integral to sea power. From a military perspective, naval force as the most important component of sea power is not simply limited to deployment of battleships. Modern weaponry has evolved into complex systems where the weapon and equipment at sea, on land, in the air, in space, and in the cyberspace connect and make a network. Any increase in the overall capability of a weapon system can be considered an increase in maritime military capability.

"Sea power cannot be improvised" (Roger, 1997, p.327). No sea power can be generated out of thin air. The elements of sea power mentioned above intertwine with one other and lead to the generation of sea power. Notwithstanding that the stakeholders of sea power have different geostrategic settings, maritime cultures, institutional procedures and economic realities; they all have to face the same challenges at sea. In the era of globalisation, while the traditional rivalry among great sea powers still exists, non-traditional maritime threats pose a serious challenge to a national community that relies heavily on good order at sea. Hence, an increasing number of countries and international organisations are developing sea power to defend their maritime interests. Against this backdrop, it is extremely important and necessary to study the 'input' of sea power – the preconditions of the generation of sea power, as well as its components – in the era of globalisation. Therefore, seeking to lay an analytical framework for the generation of sea power should be one of the contributions of this thesis. While the subject of the thesis is the EU sea power, the analytical framework on the 'input' of sea power can be used generally in the study of other nation states or stakeholders.

Moreover, this analytical framework on elements of sea power provides the basis of and criteria for the classification of sea power. Grey (1989) argued, "with the exception of a few landlocked states, all countries maintain some power at sea" (p.3). From a geographical perspective, there is a difference between natural and artificial sea power. The former refers to the countries which have the typical geographical advantages, such as the United Kingdom or the Netherlands. "Artificial sea power' pertains to countries such as China or Germany which have a mix of land and sea borders. For the natural sea power countries, the generation of sea power is 'bottom up', in so far as the influence of the sea has infiltrated every aspect of the society, its mindset and culture. Having centuries of the accumulation of wealth by fishing, maritime mercantile shipping, even naval wars, these "natural" (Richmond, 1930) sea power countries adopt a 'bottom up' way, which leaves the country's maritime development "to the market" (Till, 2018, p.401). In terms of artificial sea power, these countries have long been struggling between the choice of sea power or land power, and the strategic orientation of decision-makers plays a decisive role in the development of sea power. Hence, the generation of sea power in these countries follows the 'top down' approach, meaning that the willingness and the political aspiration at the top of the decision-making hierarchy really are key. In the era of globalisation, the value of the seas and oceans becomes more prominent and, as a result, there is an increasing tendency for more and more nation states and stakeholders to turn their attention to the ocean. In this strategic context, the EU's political ambition of being a maritime security provider seems consistent with the general direction of global strategic development.

In the twenty-first century, however, the concept of 'sea power' obviously changes with the times due to the evolution of the process of globalisation. The following changes are worth noting. First, the nature of conflicts at sea has dramatically changed. Instead of seeking to defeat opposing fleets, the purpose of sea powers turns to maintaining good order at sea. Today, the non-traditional threats of piracy, people-, drugs and arms-smuggling, illegal fishing, terrorism, environmental degradation, and systematic

despoliation of marine resources all pose a more critical hazard to the maritime commons. Under current conditions, no single government, not even the most important ones, are able to maintain good order on their own. Therefore, a variety of international collaboration becomes more frequent. Second, the subject of sea power is no longer limited to independent sovereign states, because international organisations can also have sea power. This is the inevitable result of increasing international cooperation in the field of maritime security in the era of globalisation. Third, naval force is no longer the only decisive factor in the development of sea power. Since the purpose of sea power has shifted from defeating adversaries to maintaining maritime security, all factors that can maintain maritime security can be considered components of sea power.

The 'output' of sea power refers to the consequences of the practice of the sea power. Sea power is not only the variety of elements which intertwine and interact but also the capacity growing out of the interaction of these elements. Thus, from this perspective, sea power can be defined as "the combination of a nation-state's capacity for international maritime commerce and utilisation of the oceanic resource, with its ability to project military power into the sea, for the purposes of sea and area control, and from the sea, in order to influence events on land by means of naval forces" (Tangredi, 2002). This triple-capacity framework outlines the role sea power can play in the era of globalisation.

As this definition demonstrates, sea power has three functions: to protect the maritime commons, to m and to influence the events on land. Arguably, these three are closely linked and complement one another. While the first two functions are not difficult to understand, the last one deserves more in-depth analysis and discussion. The importance of sea power is reflected not only in its ability to solve problems at sea but also in its ability to influence matters on land, thus making it an integral part of an overall national security strategy. Hence, the practice of sea power should be considered

an important means of safeguarding national interests and international maritime security.

In summary, the thesis sets out a feasible framework to observe sea power. This framework, which can be generally applied to any sea power in the world, provides the important lens through which to study the EU's resources and capacity in the maritime security sphere. The generation and practice of EU sea power authenticate modern sea power theory. EU sea power grew out of dynamic of the geographical, economic, political, institutional and military factors and, as an important tool for the EU, was used to protect the surrounding waters, to maintain control of the sea, and to influence the events on land by naval means. For the traditional sea power, such as the United States, the research question may shift away from 'how to generate a sea power' towards another one – 'how to maintain a sea power'. The modern sea power framework applies also to the emerging sea powers, such as China, Russia or India.

8.3 Empirical Findings: Understanding EU Sea Power

Based on the critical understanding of sea power in the era of globalisation, the thesis proposes using sea power theory to explain the EU's resources and capabilities in the maritime security sphere. Arguably, the EU has become more proactive and visible on the international maritime security stage in the last decade. While studying these maritime initiatives of the EU, there is a clear need for a theoretical base to understand the EU's motivations as a maritime security provider.

The rationality of choosing sea power theory to explain the EU's efforts in the maritime dimension of European security as following. First, although the EU maritime security sphere covers three existing EU policies, namely, the Integrated Maritime Policy, the Internal Security Policy, and the Common Foreign and Security Policy, the last named plays the most important role. Sea power, as an important tool for the EU to handle international relations, can be explained by the realist theory. Second, the EU, after decades of integration, "starts having state-like characteristics … should then be

expected to defend its common interests internationally" (Laursen, 2020, p.11). As a matter of fact, the EU has become an "internationally sea-policy actor" (ibid) and a "maritime security provider" (EEAS, 2021). Therefore, it is suitable to put EU sea power into a realist theoretical framework. It is important to note, however, that using realist theory to explain the EU's maritime security policy does not mean that the EU is seen as a 'power' in the realist theory. The object of this thesis is strictly limited to the EU's role in the maritime dimension of global security.

8.3.1 Understanding the generation of EU sea power

The EU is unique. However, it still can be put into the framework of sea power theory, as is proposed in 8.2 above. There are two preconditions for the generation of EU sea power: the geographical factor and the maritime interests of the EU. Five rounds of enlargement have shifted the EU's maritime status. The EU has extended its borders to the shores of the Mediterranean Sea, the Baltic Sea, the Atlantic Ocean, and the Black Sea. The EU has not only the third longest coastline in the world, but also the largest Exclusive Economic Zone. The EU is a global trading power dependent heavily on free and safe maritime shipping and has the economic imperatives to develop its capability to maintain maritime security. However, the maritime interests of the EU which derived from the geography and blue economy cannot automatically be transferred into sea power, if there is not a solid awareness of the importance of maritime security and an enhanced willingness to develop the capability to defend good order at sea.

One of the main differences between the EU and other nation states which have a profound history of maritime exploration is the way the sea power was generated. The EU has adopted a 'up-bottom' way to generate sea power. The first step of the EU is to develop a comprehensive maritime policy for the purpose of increasing integration in the important fields of maritime policy. In 2007, the Commission published *An Integrated Maritime Policy*, which set out the EU's objectives and principles for promoting the integration of the maritime economy and maritime security and based on which a cross-sectoral maritime authority was established and an integrated maritime

management mechanism was formed. The second task to achieve for the EU is to identify where needed to be concerned and which steps needed to be taken. In 2014 the Commission launched the *EU Maritime Security Strategy (EUMSS)* followed by an *Action Plan*. In terms of military aspects, due to the intergovernmental nature of CSDF, it is the EU Member Stated who decide whether to launch the military maritime operation if necessary. However, once the decision of launch a naval CSDP mission is made, an independent and completed command chain like a nation state's naval forces is established at the EU level.

Based on the study of the process and the preconditions of the generation of EU sea power, the thesis asserts that the emergence of EU sea power is not only the strategic choice of the EU and the Member States, but also the result of the dynamic of EU integration in the era of globalisation. The thesis assumes that the building of EU sea power began in the 21st century and the EU first used the sea power in the counter-piracy mission – Operation Atalanta. However, the EU had started the integration in the maritime domain much earlier. In the 1970s and the 1980s, the then European Economic Communities developed the Common Fisheries Policy [47] (CFP), the Common Transport Policy[48] and EU coastal and environmental policy[49] as well as maritime safety policies[50]. The EU's effort made on integration in these maritime fields finally led to integration in EU 'High Politics' fields – namely the security concerns. In

[47] "The CFP was first introduced in the 1970s and went through successive updates, the most recent of which took effect on 1 January 2014" (ec.europa.eu, 2020). [online] Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/fisheries/cfp_en, accessed on 1 May 2020.

[48] EU Maritime Transport Policy took place in 1986.

[49] To protec European coasts and marine waters in a comprehensive and integrated manner, the EU adopted two instruments, the 2002 *EU Recommendation on Integrated Coastal Zone Management* and the 2008 *Marine Strategy Framework Directive*.

[50] The EU adopted the Third Maritime Safety Package in 2009, which covered all chains of responsibility in the maritime sector. The European Commission can rely on the technical and scientific assistance of the European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA) (ec.europa.eu, 2020). [online] Available at: /ec.europa.eu/transport/themes/urban/cycling/guidance-cycling-projects-eu/challenges-cities-face_en, accessed on 1 May 2020.

this sense, the generation of EU sea power can be seen as the natural outcome of the EU integration, as well as the high noon of the integration process.

Meanwhile, the generation of EU sea power is also a positive response by the EU to the changing global strategic balance. The United States has been and will remain a global super sea power. However, the post-World War II order dominated by the United States and Western partners is being challenged by emerging power, such as China and Russia. The maritime dimension is also the battlefield where the West and these emerging sea powers confront one another. The United States has been moving its geopolitical focus to the India-Pacific area. The EU and its Member States had to face the reality that the United States' strategic priority is moving towards the East, and the EU must face directly the challenges presented by the emerging countries in the maritime dimension. Europe needs to develop its own capacities to protect its surrounding waters. To remain playing a significant and influential role in the world, the EU had no other choice but to build its own sea power.

Therefore, the generation of EU sea power is the EU's proactive choice to cope with the changes in the global geopolitical environment, and it is also the necessary way for the EU to realise its political ambitions. In 2019, the newly elected President of the European Commission Von de Leyen announced in her speech in the European Parliament Plenary Session an intention to build "the geopolitical Commission" (ec.europa.eu, 2019). And among the priorities proposed by the Commission, "to increase the EU's focus on external action" is arguably an important one (Subotić, 2019). Therefore, sea power, as an invaluable tool for the EU to engage in the external action, will be attracting more attention and resources.

8.3.2 Understanding the practice of EU sea power

The aim of the EU's decades-long effort to build sea power is so that sea power is able to be harnessed to maintain international maritime security. The four cases analysed in the thesis demonstrate the different forms of EU sea power 'output'. CSDP maritime

military missions are the most visible and direct form of EU sea power. By virtue of the intergovernmental nature of EU decision-making in the security and defence sphere, the decision to launch such an operation is dependent on the unanimity of all EU Member States. The Somali piracy in the Horn of Aden and the refugee crises in the Mediterranean Sea posed substantial and immediate threats to the EU's maritime security. All EU Member States perceived the urgency to take common action. The EU has had the willingness and confidence to pursue the role of 'maritime security provider'. Using sea power has become a tool in the EU's diplomatic toolbox. In terms of the EU's three CSDP missions – Operation Atalanta, Operation Sophia, and Operation IRINI – the assessment of outcome of these operations is based on the triple-capacity framework mentioned in the preceding section. Will these operations protect maritime commerce and shipping? Will they maintain control of the sea? And will they influence the events on land through naval means? These three questions set up the criteria to benchmark the role of the EU in these areas. It is noteworthy that these three maritime military operations are not the only means that the EU uses to face the security challenges off the Somali coast and in Libya. Other means include financial aid and support for improved infrastructure. Maritime military operation is only part of the EU's overall strategy in the Horn of Aden or in the Mediterranean Sea. However, sea power, as an integral component of the EU's strategic strength, plays an increasingly important role. Meanwhile, The EU also explored alternative options when CSDP actions could not be taken. The EU's Coordinated Military Presence concept, as a replacement for the CSDP operation, will be deployed firstly in the Gulf of Guinea.

Besides CSDP missions, the EU sea power also takes other forms while involved in critical geostrategic crises. The strong economic power and technical advantages of the EU can be considered as 'soft sea power' in maintaining maritime security. The EU-funded CMR programme in West Africa or the military arms sale to the ASEAN countries are both the examples of the practice of the EU 'soft sea power'. Moreover,

the EU also has identity advantage as being a party to UNCLOS and has used it in engagement in the sovereignty conflict in the South China Sea.

Based on the empirical research of the practice of EU sea power, the thesis asserts that there is a significant difference of roles pursued by the EU sea power and by the other sea powers. Instead of the pursuit of maritime hegemony, the EU chose a different direction from the United States and the emerging sea powers, that is, the role of defender of good order at sea. To date, the practice of EU sea power has all focused on the non-traditional security threats at sea, such as the fight against piracy, smuggling at sea, or research and rescue operations. The EU has not been involved in a traditional maritime confrontation. Meanwhile, the EU insisted on a rules-based order at the sea, which is consistent with the way the EU attempts to achieve on land. Therefore, EU sea power represents a new direction, and a revision of traditional sea power which was always sea hegemony. The paradigm of traditional sea power that emphasises competition and confrontation will only lead the world into an endless maritime arms race, rather than real peace and stability. EU sea power, on the other hand, with its mission to combat non-traditional threats and its emphasis on cooperation and rules, can indeed bring about a peaceful maritime environment that is safe and free for all nations of the world.

8.3.3 Understanding the characteristics of EU sea power

The EU is unique, and EU sea power is also unique. Which makes the EU sea power different from other sea powers in the world? The most salient feature of EU sea power is the decision-making procedure while naval force is involved. Instead of the EU, it is the 27 Member States who decide whether to deploy naval force. Therefore, the military capacity of the EU is determined by the military capacity of the individual Member States. As a result, the EU must focus on the surrounding waters which are of strategic importance. In this sense, the EU sea power is a regional sea power with limited military strength. This characteristic of EU sea power restricted the EU from being involved in high intensity naval operations. Until now, whether in the Horn of Aden or in the

Mediterranean Sea, the main operational actions of the EU naval forces have been limited to the low-risk, low-cost and low-conflict missions. This seems to be at odds with the EU's ambitions. To meet the requirement of a global maritime security provider, the EU needs to contribute more resources to sea power related fields, such as research into and development of naval capabilities.

However, the lack of military capabilities has prompted the EU to rely more on non-military means while involved in maritime conflicts. The EU is keen to apply its normative power at the sea as the EU does on land, which is obvious in the involvement of the EU in the South China Sea. There is also an increasing tendency for the EU to use all the resources at its disposal to maintain a secure maritime environment. The EU emphasises the need for a comprehensive approach when dealing with security issues. And EU sea power occupies an important and integral role in the EU's comprehensive approach. As this thesis asserts, the generation and the development of EU sea power is part and parcel of the EU's overall security strategy, a powerful tool for the EU to be a global security actor in the world.

Moreover, it is noteworthy that cooperation occupies an important place in the concept of the EU sea power. There are various levels of cooperation between the EU and other stakeholders of the world. The cooperation with NATO and the Navy of the United States is at the top level of the cooperation hierarchy. The EU's maritime military operation off Somali coast and in the Mediterranean Sea were both supported by NATO allies. Hence, the EU's partnership with its Western allies is the cornerstone of EU sea power. In the meantime, the EU also cooperates with third parties. In the operation in the Horn of Africa, the EU works closely with local neighbouring countries. In the Gulf of Guinea, the EU relies heavily on the close cooperation of local governments. In the South China Sea, there is an increasing trend in cooperation between the EU and the ASEAN countries. There are two reasons for this. The cooperation with Western partners bridges the military deficit of the EU. The EU's naval force is supported to

ensure the success of the maritime military operations. This reflects the multilateralism which the EU favours in international affairs.

8.3.4 Understanding the significance of EU sea power

The impact of EU sea power on the international maritime security is significant. The emerging EU sea power is beneficial to international maritime security. In the era of globalisation, sea and oceans play an unprecedented role in almost all aspects of the international community, and there is a global trend that international cooperation is rising. In today's world, besides the traditional sea powers, such as the United States and the United Kingdom, there are emerging sea powers including China, Russia, and India. Since Operation Atalanta in 2008, the EU naval force has contributed to the security of the Global Commons by saving lives and deterring the crimes at the sea.

Moreover, EU sea power is beneficial to the security and prosperity of Europe itself. The EU introduced 'strategic autonomy' in 2016 and seeks to improve its autonomous capability to defend Member States. The maritime dimension of European security deserves more attention. Hence, EU sea power as an important defender of European interests is vital to the future of the EU and its Members States.

EU sea power is also the link between the EU and the African continent. Three of the four cases that the thesis discusses are off the coast of the African continent. Currently the EU is devising a new foreign strategy towards Africa and has taken maritime security as a diplomatic tool to manage relations with the African countries. Arguably, a stable and prosperous African continent is vital to the future of the whole of Europe.

Meanwhile, EU sea power is becoming the new bargaining counter when engaging in the Indo-Pacific region. From the beginning of the twenty-first century, the EU set out to engage in the Asia-Pacific region. The South China Sea is a contested region, and the EU is inevitably engaged in this issue. While the naval forces of the EU Member States patrol in the disputed waters, the EU diplomats bargain at the negotiating table.

As maritime issues enter Sino-European relations, EU sea power is not only involved in the conflict in the South China Sea through various forms, but also the leverage available to the EU.

8.3.5 Understanding the limitations of EU sea power

Every coin has two sides. “The EU is neither a state nor a traditional international organisation, yet neither is it a fully-fledged supranational entity” (Dover and Kristensen, 2016, p. 253). The limitations of EU sea power epitomise those of the EU as a security agent. Due to the intergovernmental nature of CSDP, political differences and divergent interests among the EU Member States lead to a difficult and time-consuming process before deciding to launch any CSDP mission. This directly affects the efficiency of the EU while conducting military interventions at sea or launching any decision in the maritime security sphere. Each EU Member State has its own geostrategic setting, cultural expectation, institutional procedure, economic requirement and resources. All these factors influence the making of the vision on the maritime security of a Member State. Although the EU has made great progress in developing a collective recognition of the importance of seas and oceans, it needs more cooperation and coordination from all the Member States to make the EU sea power stronger and faster.

Faced with the unalterable intergovernmental nature of the decision-making process in the security and defence spheres, the EU has sought to take some flexible steps to break these limitations. Firstly, it encouraged a multi-speed approach in the development of military capacity. One of the most convincing examples is the launch of PESCO, because “the process of PESCO allows a sub-set of EU member states to engage in further defence cooperation, and thus can avoid the tyranny of the slowest” (ibid, p.250). Secondly, it adopted a more flexible decision-procedure while targeting urgent circumstances. For example, regarding the deteriorating maritime security environment in the Gulf of Guinea, the EU adopted the CMP concept, which allows the EU Member States present in this maritime area to share awareness, analysis and information. As

such, a permanent and visible European maritime presence and outreach around the world can come to fruition. Thirdly, individual Member States were encouraged to act against a background in which a collective involvement at EU level was hard to achieve. As noted in the third and the fourth case studies, the EU has been encouraging those Member States which are more interested to act individually. However, since the contradiction between the intergovernmental nature of CSDP and a more integrated naval strength seems to be a chronic problem, it will take a long time for EU sea power to achieve a breakthrough in progress.

8.4 Future Research: Improvements and Suggestions

The remaining section isolates some areas in which future consideration is needed. Firstly, the application of the arguments regarding sea power should be applied to other nation states or stakeholders. The thesis lays the framework on the 'input' and the 'output' of sea power, and this framework can be applicable to another region of the world. It would be particularly interesting to identify whether a nation state or a stakeholder is a sea power. From the perspective of the generation of sea power, new research should begin by exploring the preconditions on which the sea power is based. Does a country have a national maritime policy at the top of its decision-making hierarchy? Does a country have a maritime strategy which reflects the willingness and determination of the decision-makers? Regarding the 'output' of sea power, the triple-capacity framework is also applicable to explain how sea power works.

In addition to exploring the four cases studied in the thesis, it would also be beneficial to explore how the EU is dealing with the maritime issues in other parts of the world. While the other surrounding seas are less important strategically, the EU may deal with the maritime security issue in different way. As such, applying the findings of this thesis to the other maritime areas could further strengthen the arguments made here or result in the identification of new pathways to deploy EU sea power.

Beyond the application of the findings to differing cases, it would be of interest to explore the factors which will influence the development of EU sea power in the future. Brexit is an extremely important change for the EU from the aspects of decision-making and maritime capacity building. The withdrawal of the United Kingdom with one of the most powerful European navies will have a significant long-term impact for EU sea power.

Covid-19 swept the world starting in late 2019 and no country was spared. As the writing of this thesis comes to a close, the whole world is still under the shadow of the pandemic. Covid-19 may drastically change many aspects of today's world. The impact of the pandemic on maritime security and EU sea power will take some time to become apparent.

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